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OFFICE OF THE MINISTER
WITHOUT PORTFOLIO

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PRESIDENT NASSER

CONVERSATION

3.9.69

+ the UAR Minister for Foreign Affairs

on 30.8.69

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CLOSED UNTIL 2006

CONFIDENTIAL

[redacted]

Sir H. Em. George Thomson, MP — Mr. Hunt

Sir Michael Stewart — Private Secretary

← Mr. D. Simon

In welcoming Mr. Thomson Mr. Hunt said he had hoped reports of the Minister's talks with the President and the Foreign Minister were very happy with what he had heard.

2. Mr. Thomson said it was very agreeable to his personally to come back to Cairo after an interval of four years. He remembered vividly the talks he had had with Mr. Hunt in 1965 and was very disappointed that circumstances had made it impossible for him to complete his programme. On this occasion he was particularly pleased to have had the opportunity of seeing something of the UAR outside Cairo, especially the Aswan High Dam and the archaeological sites at Luxor and Sakkara. He was very glad to find that Anglo-UAR bilateral relations were improving and hoped they would continue to do so. The arrival of the Royal Ballet and the British Sculpture exhibition for the millenary celebrations were particularly gratifying to him since he had fulfilled the Cultural Agreement in 1965.

3. Mr. Thomson went on to say that as regards the general political situation in the Middle East he had observed two main changes since his last visit. On the one hand, the friction between Britain and the UAR over Aden was now at an end and the policy Britain had adopted for the Gulf area appeared generally acceptable to the UAR. On the other hand there were disturbing developments in the Arab-Israeli situation. The whole situation was far more unsettling, and it seemed to him that, if disaster were to be avoided, a political settlement had to be found. The only hope of this was in the implementation of the 1967 United Nations resolution. He was very conscious of the fact that the resolution was

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almost two years old, but Britain believed that the hopes of implementation were by no means exhausted. Britain had important interests in the Middle East and it was to her advantage to work for a political settlement. Having seen the High Dam and something of the Egyptian countryside he realised how important a settlement was for the UAR to facilitate peaceful construction and development.

4. Dr. Fawzi said he readily agreed with Mr. Thomson's assessment of the situation. But it was no good simply agreeing that the situation was explosive: the essential thing was to decide what action to take. The UAR did not want to say that any of their friends were doing too little, but they felt that all of them should exert themselves a little more to find a common-sense way out. It was clear that no party would gain any advantage from further destruction in the area and the UAR was still deeply interested in a political settlement. On their present policies the Israelis were effectively erecting a ghetto for themselves, and the Americans were being neither fair nor far-sighted. The UAR hoped that they could rely on further British co-operation in seeking a political solution.

5. Mr. Thomson said that Britain was in close touch with the Americans and, despite appearances, was very active behind the scenes in seeking to promote a settlement. British policy had not changed. HMG had been primarily responsible for the United Nations resolution and wished to see it implemented. There was no question of an ambivalent attitude on our part. HMG was watching the situation very closely to see whether there was any scope for intervention with a British initiative. In matters of this kind the right timing was crucially important. But he was most anxious that there should be no misunderstanding about the United Nations resolution. It was a package and it had some unpalatable things in it. Its over-riding principle was that there must be no territorial gains as a result of war: Israel must withdraw. But Israel must have secure and recognised boundaries agreed internationally. The State of Israel was there and had to be accepted as a fact. It would not be enough for the Arab States simply to accept Israel's boundaries. There would have to be firm guarantees and this was bound to cause problem for the Arab countries. There were however various approaches to the question of guarantees and on Sharm el Sheikh, for instance, HMG inclined to the view that a United Nations (not Israeli) presence would probably be most satisfactory.

6. Dr. Fawzi said that the UAR was very well aware of the difficulties. When the UAR accepted the United Nations resolution they did so on the understanding that it ruled out acquisition of territory by force. They could not in any circumstances, therefore, accept that Israel should acquire any territory through implementation of the resolution. No Arab political leader could agree to give up Jerusalem to the Israelis. In any settlement with the Israelis minor territorial changes were not, of course, ruled out but these must be strictly confined to very small areas such as villages which were at present cut in two or separated from their water supply. There could be no changes of the magnitude which the Americans seemed to have in mind. Faced with the attitude of the Israelis and the Americans - who seemed to allow the Israelis to be judges in their own cause, as was instanced by the proposal to station Israeli troops at Sharm el Sheikh - the UAR had no choice but to continue to be prepared for all eventualities, although they still hoped that common-sense would prevail and a peaceful solution would emerge. The UAR might be worried by the problem of Israel but it was certainly not frightened by Israel and, in the end, if a peaceful settlement were not achieved the question might be whether Israel should be allowed to exist at all. Such a turn in events would be bad for all concerned in the Middle East and he hoped that the Middle East's wound would not be allowed to fester to that extent, despite the inflammation which the Americans were causing by their actions.

7. Mr. Thomas said he had been encouraged by the degree of importance which the UAR clearly attached to achieving a political settlement. He was very conscious of the difficulties which they had to face in the press and amongst youth, for instance, in pursuing a peaceful policy. He had also noted how very considerably the Palestine resistance organisation had grown in the Middle East since his last visit four years before. This was a new and dangerous force to be reckoned with and a political settlement, if it was to last, would need to take account of the views of the Palestinians.

8. Dr. Fawzi said it was true that his Government was being increasingly criticised for its attachment to a peaceful settlement based on the 1967 resolution. Indeed at meetings over the last four days he had been criticised by colleagues from other Arab countries, but that did not weaken the resolve of the UAR. It was important in their view to

work constructively on the basis of the resolution. In principle the UAR agreed to limitations on armaments for the area but could not agree in present circumstances. It was right for the UAR to look to its own security. But why all the talk about Israel's security when over the past twenty years it had always been Israel who had been the aggressor in the area? When he had asked the Americans point blank whether they would intervene to stop any Arab invasion of Israel they would not deny it.

9. Dr. Fawzi emphasised that in any political settlement in the area the UAR would wish to maintain absolute freedom to refuse diplomatic relations and trade with Israel, even though it recognised Israel's international boundaries. The UAR had no bitterness against Israel as such and realised they could not "throw it into the sea". The UAR were very proud of their traditions and of the way they had treated the Jews in Egypt: they had been in a privileged position; there had been no ghettoes and no pogroms. Once the Israelis withdrew from conquered territories and were within boundaries recognised by the UAR it was unthinkable that the UAR would have any cause to make war on Israel.

10. In conclusion Mr. Thomson reiterated HMG's firm resolve to work for a peaceful settlement on the basis of the United Nations resolution. Nothing had deflected HMG from backing the resolution and the Four Power and Two Power Talks, though it was no secret that the Israeli Prime Minister had sought to do so when she had visited London in June. Mr. Thomson added that he would probably be visiting Israel later in the autumn and he would speak to the Israelis in the same terms as he had spoken to UAR Ministers.

11. Dr. Fawzi said the British were noted for their ingenuity and he begged that they should use this ingenuity to bring pressure to bear in the right quarters to achieve a peaceful settlement.

Office of the Minister without Portfolio

12th September 1969

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CONFIDENTIAL

RECORD OF MEETING BETWEEN THE MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO AND DR. FAWZI (Special Assistant to President Nasser on Foreign Affairs) IN CAIRO AT 3.45 p.m. ON 3 SEPTEMBER 1969

Present

The Rt. Hon. George Thomson M.P.
Sir Richard Beaumont
Mr. D. Hanson

Dr. Fawzi
Private Secretary

In welcoming Mr. Thomson Dr. Fawzi said he had had reports of the Minister's talk with the President and the Foreign Minister and was very happy with what he had heard.

2. Mr. Thomson said it was very agreeable to him personally to come back to Cairo after an interval of four years. He remembered vividly the talks he had had with Dr. Fawzi in 1965 and was very disappointed that circumstances had made it impossible for him to complete his programme. On this occasion he was particularly pleased to have had the opportunity of seeing something of the UAR outside Cairo, especially the Aswan High Dam and the archaeological sites at Luxor and Saqqara. He was very glad to find that Anglo-UAR bilateral relations were improving and hoped they would continue to do so. The arrival of the Royal Ballet and the British Sculpture exhibition for the Cairo millenary celebrations were particularly gratifying to him since he had initialled the Cultural Agreement in 1965.

3. Mr. Thomson went on to say that as regards the general political situation in the Middle East he had observed two main changes since his last visit. On the one hand, the friction between Britain and the UAR over Aden was now at an end and the policy Britain had adopted for the Gulf area seemed generally acceptable in the UAR. On the other hand,

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there were distressing developments in the Arab-Israeli situation. The whole situation was far more menacing, and it seemed to him that, if disaster were to be avoided, a political settlement had to be found. The only hope of this was in the implementation of the 1967 United Nations resolution. He was very conscious of the fact that the resolution was almost two years old, but Britain believed that the hopes of implementation were by no means exhausted. Britain had important interests in the Middle East and it was to her advantage to work for a political settlement. Having seen the High Dam and something of the Egyptian countryside he realised how important a settlement was for the UAR, to facilitate peaceful construction and development.

4. Dr. Fawzi said he readily agreed with Mr. Thomson's assessment of the situation. But it was no good simply agreeing that the situation was explosive: the essential thing was to decide what action to take. The UAR did not want to say that any of their friends were doing too little, but they felt that all of them should exert themselves a little more to find a common-sense way out. It was clear that no party would gain any advantage from further destruction in the area and the UAR was still deeply interested in a political settlement. On their present policies the Israelis were effectively erecting a ghetto for themselves, and the Americans were being neither fair nor far-sighted. The UAR hoped that they could rely on further British co-operation in seeking a political solution.

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for the United Nations resolution and wished to see it implemented. There was no question of an ambivalent attitude on our part. HMG was watching the situation very closely to see whether there was any scope for intervention with a British initiative. In matters of this kind the right timing was crucially important. But he was most anxious that there should be no misunderstanding about the United Nations resolution. It was a package and it had some unpalatable things in it. Its overriding principle was that there must be no territorial gains as a result of war: Israel must withdraw. But Israel must have secure and recognised boundaries agreed internationally. The State of Israel was there and had to be accepted as a fact. It would not be enough for the Arab ~~societies~~ states simply to accept Israel's boundaries. There would have to be firm guarantees and this was bound to cause problems for the Arab countries. There were however various approaches to the question of guarantees and on Sharm el Shaikh, for instance, HMG inclined to the view that a United Nations (not Israeli) presence would probably be most satisfactory.

6. Dr. Fawzi said the UAR was very well aware of the difficulties. When the UAR accepted the United Nations resolution they did so on the understanding that it ruled out acquisition of territory by force. They could not in any circumstances, therefore, accept that Israel should acquire any territory through implementation of the resolution. No Arab political leader could agree to give up Jerusalem to the Israelis. In any settlement with the Israelis minor territorial changes were not, of course, ruled out but these must be strictly confined to very small areas such as villages which were at present cut in two or separated from their water supply. There could be no

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7. Mr. Thomson said he had been encouraged by the degree of importance which the UAR clearly attached to achieving a political settlement. He was very conscious of the difficulties which they had to face in the press and amongst youth, for instance, in pursuing a peaceful policy. He had also noted how very considerably the Palestine resistance organisation had grown in the Middle East since his last visit four years before. This was a new and dangerous force to be reckoned with and a political settlement, if it was to last, would need to take account of the views of the Palestinians.

8. Dr. Fawzi said it was true that his Government was being increasingly criticised for its attachment to a

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peaceful settlement based on the 1967 resolution. Indeed at meetings over the last four days he had been criticised by colleagues from other Arab countries, but that did not weaken the resolve of the UAR. It was important in their view to work constructively on the basis of the resolution. In principle the UAR agreed to limitations on armaments for the area but could not agree in present circumstances. It was right for the UAR to look to its own security. But why all the talk about Israel's security when over the past twenty years it had always been Israel who had been the aggressor in the area? When he had asked the Americans point blank whether they would intervene to stop any Arab invasion of Israel they would not deny it.

9. Dr. Fawzi emphasised that in any political settlement in the area the UAR would wish to maintain absolute freedom to refuse diplomatic relations and trade with Israel, even though it recognised Israel's and international boundaries. The UAR had no bitterness against Israel as such and realised they could not "throw it into the sea". The UAR were very proud of their traditions and of the way they had treated the Jews in Egypt: they had been in a privileged position; ~~with~~ have had been no ghettoes and no pogroms. Once the Israelis withdrew from conquered territories and were within boundaries recognised by the UAR it was unthinkable that the UAR would have any cause to make war on Israel.

10. In conclusion Mr. Thomson reiterated HMG's firm resolve to work for a peaceful settlement on the basis of the United Nations resolution. Nothing had deflected HMG from backing the resolution and the Four Power and Two Power Talks, though it was no secret that the Israeli Prime Minister had sought to do so when she had visited

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London in June. Dr. Fawzi said the British were noted for their ingenuity and he begged that they should use this ingenuity to bring pressure to bear in the right quarters to achieve a peaceful settlement.

ANNEX "A"

Call on the President of the
National Assembly on 25 August, 1969

Mr Sabri Hamadeh, referring to the internal situation in the Lebanon, said that discussions were now going on with a view to forming a Government in the light of the new urgent situation created by the burning of the Aqsa Mosque.

Mr Thomson interposed that this event had produced a strong reaction in Britain - even newspapers normally sympathetic to Israel had seen in the incident a proof that Israel was wrong to have occupied Old Jerusalem.

Referring to the Middle East situation in general, Mr Hamadeh said that Lebanon owed much to Britain, which had been its only outside friend in the struggle with France for independence in 1943. Other Arab countries also owed a great deal to Britain, which knew and understood the Arabs better than any other foreign country. But there seemed to have been a change in the British attitude in recent months. Britain seemed to be tied to the U.S. policy, which was hostile to the Arabs and supported Israeli aggression with weapons. Some even said that Britain was behind American policy and that we were using American strength for our own ends. Israel was an unnatural thing, a cancer, bound to vanish sooner or later, and it was surely not in British interests to give it support. Such a policy forced the Arabs into the arms of the Communists, despite their profound religious antipathy towards Communist doctrine.

Mr Thomson replied that there had been no change in British policy since the November resolution of 1967. We had been very active behind the scenes in the search for a peaceful settlement,

particularly in New York, through Lord Caradon, who had been mainly responsible for drafting the 1967 resolution. Our tactics were to try to influence the United States, who were engaged in bilateral talks on the whole problem with the Soviet Union. When Mrs Meir had visited London recently she had tried very hard to persuade the British Government to wreck the 4-Power talks, and had been considerably put out by her failure. The Israelis had, in fact, said privately that they accepted the 1967 Resolution as a basis for discussion, although they had not said so publicly. In the view of the British Government, the only alternative to continued conflict with a constant risk of a major explosion was a negotiated settlement to which both sides must contribute, Israel by withdrawing from the occupied territories (although we considered that minor frontier rectifications were called for) and the Arabs (especially U.A.R.) by recognizing Israel's existence and her right to peace and security as a Middle East State.

The reference to frontier rectifications elicited a protest from Mr Hamadeh that it was surely wrong to reward aggression by giving Israel more territory, however little. How could this policy be squared with the Charter and with the numerous United Nations resolutions condemning Israeli aggression?

Mr Thomson said that he was not thinking either of the frontier of the U.A.R. or of that with Syria; but the frontier between Israel and Jordan was difficult to defend in many instances and needed adjusting, not in the interests of Israel, nor of that of Jordan, but in the interests of peace. The British Government would support no rectifications which were not acceptable to both sides.

ANNEX "B"

Call on the President of the Republic
26 August, 1969

After an exchange of courtesies during which Mr Thomson expressed his gratitude for the hospitality he was enjoying and the President told his favourite story about the British having their coups and revolutions in the House of Commons, thus leaving the people free to indulge in their favourite sport of cricket, Mr Thomson explained British policy in regard to the Middle East conflict, in terms similar to those he had used when speaking to the President of the National Assembly. He emphasized that there had been no change in British policy, as reflected in the British-inspired Security Council Resolution of November, 1967.

The President took up a reference by Mr Thomson to frontier rectifications within the framework of a package deal and asked whether this included Jerusalem. Mr Thomson agreed that Jerusalem was a major problem, but wondered whether the recent fire in the Aqsa mosque might not help to convince world opinion of the need to revert to an international solution. If so, good would come from evil. The President commented that he did not think that Israel would suffer from the Aqsa Mosque incident in terms of world sympathy, since the present investigation and trial would probably convince the rest of the world that she was not directly to blame and that the Arab reaction had been mainly propaganda. But the incident might bring the non-Arab Moslem world closer together with the Arab world.

President Hélou said that he had the impression, from the account which the President of the Assembly had given to him of the latter's talk with Mr Thomson, that Mr Thomson was perhaps inclined to be optimistic about the chances of an agreed settlement of the Palestine question. Speaking very frankly, he was

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unable to share any such optimism. He had given up hope of a settlement about two years ago, and nothing had happened since to suggest that he was wrong. The Arab peoples could not accept the humiliation involved in acknowledging the 1967 defeat. Any Arab Government that did so was likely to be swept away. Two separate conflicts were taking place: the Arabs against Israel (this being a conflict "between Mohammed and Ezekiel" - i.e., between two absolutely incompatible religions) and the Arab peoples against their Governments; in both cases China, rather than the Soviet Union, was tertius gaudens. Events were now getting out of the control of theGovernments. It was only a matter of weeks or at best a very few months before President Nasser would have to choose between destruction at the hands of his own people and another attempt at war with the Israelis. (To Mr Thomson's comment that it would surely be a very long time before the U.A.R. was able to take on the Israeli army without catastrophic consequences, the President replied that he quite agreed, but that Nasser was capable of doing a great deal of political damage, even if he could do little military damage.) The President illustrated his thesis with reference to recent events in the Lebanon. On the previous day the Israelis had conveyed (via the U.N. Observer team in Lebanon) a particularly menacing threat of direct action against the Lebanese Armed forces. Any major attack from Israel would demonstrate the Government's inability to defend Lebanese territory and endanger the present régime, whose destruction was not merely an Israeli aim but was also sought by Syria and certain other Arab countries. The disappearance of the Lebanese state in its present form (i.e. linked with the West through its Christian element, and based on mutual tolerance and deomocratic procedures) would have unforesee-

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able repercussions in and beyond the Middle East.

(The President later sent a verbal message to H.M. Ambassador to the effect that he had forgotten to explain his proposals for putting U.N. forces in the Israeli-occupied territories, thus separating the combatants, stopping the shooting and [redacted] making possible a stage-by-stage settlement which could be worked out at leisure.)

ANNEX "C"

Call on the Acting Prime Minister
27 August, 1969

After thanking Mr Karamé for the hospitality and courtesies extended to him in the Lebanon, Mr Thomson said that he had derived two main impressions from his conversations on political affairs in Beirut. The first was there was a widespread feeling that nothing could be done towards a just settlement on the Palestine problem except by the use of force. The second was a general idea that British policy had changed in recent months and that we had commited ourselves, along with the Americans, to supporting Israeli intransigence. Although the British Government were fully aware of the great difficulties of the Middle East problem, we could not agree that things had reached a stage where it was hopeless to think in terms of a negotiated settlement. We intended to continue our utmost to achieve one, and here Mr Thomson described Her Majesty's Government's attitude and activities since the British-sponsored Security Council Resolution of November, 1967, on the lines of his discussions with the President of the National Assembly and the President of the Republic. He added a reference to the representations which H.M. Ambassador had been instructed to make about a claim by the P.F.L.P., datelined from Beirut, to have been the author of various attacks on Jewish-owned property in London.

Mr Karamé spoke about the great difficulty in which a moderate Government like the Lebanese Government was placed in a situation like the present, when feelings were running very high and actual fighting was going on in Israel's other Arab neighbours. It was not easy in such circumstances to justify standing aside. Moreover, the issue was a fundamental one, of grave historic

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injustice to the Palestine people, an injustice which the U.N. and the great powers seemed to be unable or unwilling to put right; indeed, the latest U.S. proposals made it clear that their policy was to give full backing to Israeli intransigence and to ignore the rights of the Palestinians. The Lebanese had noted with great disappointment that the recent Security Council resolution about the Israeli attacks on Southern Lebanon had put the aggressor on the same moral level as the victim. If the Palestinians could not obtain elementary justice by negotiation and persuasion, they must inevitably have recourse to force. They had, in any case, nothing left to lose except their lives.

Commenting on a reference by Mr Thomson to the Baghdad executions, Mr Karamé replied to the effect that a country engaged in a war in which its very existence was at stake could not be expected to be gentle towards its enemies.

ANNEX "D"

Call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, 29 August, 1969

After the usual courtesies, Mr Salem launched straight into a complaint that the Western Powers seemed unwilling to give a helping hand to the Lebanon, which was in grave difficulties, not only because of Israel, but also as a result of a concerted and determined attempt by "progressive" Arab governments, with the Soviet Union behind them, to detatch her from her connections with the West and incorporate her in their bloc. The Soviet Ambassador had been to see him twice recently to ask why the Lebanon did not follow the example of the U.A.R., Syria, Iraq and others by giving diplomatic recognition to the German Democratic Republic. He and his like-minded colleagues would resist this to the utmost, but what could the Lebanon do against the combined strength of its Arab "brethren" - who were in fact more dangerous than Israel? At the recent Cairo meeting he had, against strong opposition, insisted on registering reservations about freedom of action for the fedayeen. News of this was being leaked to the Lebanese Press with great caution in the hope of avoiding an uproar. The trickiness of the situation in the Lebanon was illustrated by the clash which had taken place on the previous day between Palestinian refugees near Tripoli and the Security Forces; casualties had in fact been substantially more than had been divulged in the Press.

Great Britain, which had been so active two years ago, seemed to have given up trying to prevent any further deterioration in the situation. It was difficult now to believe in the possibility of any peaceful settlement. The Arab Governments concerned (except Syria) had accepted the 1967 Resolution, but Israel had not, and no attempt seemed to have been made by the Western Powers to persuade her to do so. Indeed, the latest U.S.

proposals lent colour to stories that U.S. policy was dictated from Jerusalem. Paradoxically, the effect of Western support for Israel was to favour Israeli and Soviet interests against those of the Arabs and the U.S.A.

Replying to Mr Thomson's suggestion that the Lebanese could surely be reasonably satisfied with the recent unanimous Security Council resolution condemning Israel, Mr Salem asked why, after voting for it, did the Americans have to go out of their way to back Israel over the question of the validity of the Israel/ Lebanon Armistice Convention? It was not true that the Lebanon had ever denounced it, and they had not fired a shot in 1967. The Lebanon attached the utmost importance to the Convention, because in their eyes it put the frontier with Israel out of reach of dispute, whereas the 1967 ceasefire agreement, to which the Lebanon was not a party, opened the door to "rectification".

Mr Thomson suggested that the Minister's view of possible developments was somewhat too sombre; the latest indications were that both the U.S. and Soviet Governments still thought that the two-power talks were worth pursuing. Each was acting like an advocate, seeking the most advantageous terms for his client: if the U.S. attitude was really as rigidly pro-Israeli as was suggested, the Russians would hardly have continued the dialogue. Moreover, the Israelis had privately (although admittedly not publicly) indicated their acceptance of the 1967 Resolution as a possible basis for a settlement. (The Minister interjected here [redacted] that if they accepted it, they must say so.) The whole idea of Four-Power talks had been strongly resisted by the Israelis, and Mrs Meir had made great efforts in London to get us to wreck them. But

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we, as well as the Americans, had insisted on them. This surely was not to be described as "backing out" or partiality toward Israel. As regards the Armistice Convention, the British Government regarded the existing Lebanese Israeli frontiers as secure and recognised, and in no need of adjustment.

The Minister was not to be consoled. He still felt that we ought to, and could, do more. He put forward three suggestions:

(a) the Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs had told him during his recent visit to Amman that the Israelis' second destruction and refusal to allow the repair of the East Ghor canal had endangered the livelihood of a considerable population and had asked him to ask the Americans and British to ask the Israelis, on humanitarian grounds, to allow repairs to be made.

(b) We should do our utmost to persuade the Israelis to accept U.N. Observers on their side of the frontier. For their part, and provided this happened, the Lebanese were perfectly happy to agree to a dramatic increase in the number of observers (at present 5 or 6) on their side. This would make things much easier for the Lebanese Government. (The Minister clearly implied that this was because it would make it difficult for the Arab Nationalists to claim that Israeli accusations of fedayeen raids from Lebanese territory were all false.).

(c) Finally, the Minister said that for a long time Lebanon had been asking for landing rights in Hong Kong for one of their civilian airlines.

They would return to the charge in talks which were about to be held between the two governments to review the existing Civil Aviation Agreement. This was surely a small matter for us, but of considerable importance for the Lebanon.

H.M. Ambassador explained that the Agreement was based on reciprocity and that other airlines, notably K.L.M., had been refused landing rights in Hong Kong. The Minister said that what he was asking for was not reciprocity so much as a helpful gesture to the weaker side.

ANNEX "A"

Call on the President of the
National Assembly on 25 August, 1969

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Mr Thomson interposed that this event had produced a strong reaction in Britain - even newspapers normally sympathetic to Israel had seen in the incident a proof that Israel was wrong to have occupied Old Jerusalem.

Referring to the Middle East situation in general, Mr Hamadeh said that Lebanon owed much to Britain, which had been its only outside friend in the struggle with France for independence in 1943. Other Arab countries also owed a great deal to Britain, which knew and understood the Arabs better than any other foreign country. But there seemed to have been a change in the British attitude in recent months. Britain seemed to be tied to [redacted] U.S. policy, which was hostile to the Arabs and supported Israeli aggression with weapons. Some even said that Britain was behind American policy and that we were using American strength for our own ends. Israel was an unnatural thing, a cancer, bound to vanish sooner or later, and it was surely not in British interests to give it support. Such a policy forced the Arabs into the arms of the Communists, despite their profound religious antipathy towards Communist doctrine.

Mr Thomson replied that there had been no change in British policy since the November resolution of 1967. We had been very active behind the scenes in the search for a peaceful settlement,

particularly in New York, through Lord Caradon, who had been mainly responsible for drafting the 1967 resolution. Our tactics were to try to influence the United States, who were engaged in bilateral talks on the whole problem with the Soviet Union. When Mrs Meir had visited London recently she had tried very hard to persuade the British Government to wreck the 4-Power talks, and had been considerably put out by her failure. The Israelis had, in fact, said privately that they accepted the 1967 Resolution as a basis for discussion, although they had not said so publicly. In the view of the British Government, the only alternative to continued conflict with a constant risk of a major explosion was a negotiated settlement to which both sides must contribute, Israel by withdrawing from the occupied territories (although we considered that minor frontier rectifications were called for) and the Arabs (especially U.A.R.) by recognizing Israel's existence and her right to peace and security as a Middle East State.

The reference to frontier rectifications elicited a protest from Mr Hamadeh that it was surely wrong to reward aggression by giving Israel more territory, however little. How could this policy be squared with the Charter and with the numerous United Nations resolutions condemning Israeli aggression?

Mr Thomson said that he was not thinking either of the frontier of the U.A.R. or of that with Syria; but the frontier between Israel and Jordan was difficult to defend in many instances and needed adjusting, not in the interests of Israel, nor of that of Jordan, but in the interests of peace. The British Government would support no rectifications which were not acceptable to both sides.

ANNEX "B"

Call on the President of the Republic
26 August, 1969

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The President took up a reference by Mr Thomson to frontier rectifications within the framework of a package deal and asked whether this included Jerusalem. Mr Thomson agreed that Jerusalem was a major problem, but wondered whether the recent fire in the Aqsa mosque might not help to convince world opinion of the need to revert to an international solution. If so, good would come from evil. The President commented that he did not think that Israel would suffer from the Aqsa Mosque incident in terms of world sympathy, since the present investigation and trial would probably convince the rest of the world that she was not directly to blame and that the Arab reaction had been mainly propaganda. But the incident might bring the non-Arab Moslem world closer together with the Arab world.

President Hélou said that he had the impression, from the account which the President of the Assembly had given to him of the latter's talk with Mr Thomson, that Mr Thomson was perhaps inclined to be optimistic about the chances of an agreed settlement of the Palestine question. Speaking very frankly, he was

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unable to share any such optimism. He had given up hope of a settlement about two years ago, and nothing had happened since to suggest that he was wrong. The Arab peoples could not accept the humiliation involved in acknowledging the 1967 defeat. Any Arab Government that did so was likely to be swept away. Two separate conflicts were taking place: the Arabs against Israel (this being a conflict "between Mohammed and Ezekiel" - i.e., between two absolutely incompatible religions) and the Arab peoples against their Governments; in both cases China, rather than the Soviet Union, was tertius gaudens. Events were now getting out of the control of theGovernments. It was only a matter of weeks or at best a very few months before President Nasser would have to choose between destruction at the hands of his own people and another attempt at war with the Israelis. (To Mr Thomson's comment that it would surely be a very long time before the U.A.R. was able to take on the Israeli army without catastrophic consequences, the President replied that he quite agreed, but that Nasser was capable of doing a great deal of political damage, even if he could do little military damage.) The President illustrated his thesis with reference to recent events in the Lebanon. On the previous day the Israelis had conveyed (via the U.N. Observer team in Lebanon) a particularly menacing threat of direct action against the Lebanese Armed forces. Any major attack from Israel would demonstrate the Government's inability to defend Lebanese territory and endanger the present régime, whose destruction was not merely an Israeli aim but was also sought by Syria and certain other Arab countries. The disappearance of the Lebanese state in its present form (i.e. linked with the West through its Christian element, and based on mutual tolerance and deomocratic procedures) would have unforesee-

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able repercussions in and beyond the Middle East.

(The President later sent a verbal message to H.M. Ambassador to the effect that he had forgotten to explain his proposals for putting U.N. forces in the Israeli-occupied territories, thus separating the combatants, stopping the shooting and [redacted] making possible a stage-by-stage settlement which could be worked out at leisure.)

ANNEX "C"

Call on the Acting Prime Minister
27 August, 1969

After thanking Mr Karamé for the hospitality and courtesies extended to him in the Lebanon, Mr Thomson said that he had derived two main impressions from his conversations on political affairs in Beirut. The first was there was a widespread feeling that nothing could be done towards a just settlement on the Palestine problem except by the use of force. The second was a general idea that British policy had changed in recent months and that we had commited ourselves, along with the Americans, to supporting Israeli intransigence. Although the British Government were fully aware of the great difficulties of the Middle East problem, we could not agree that things had reached a stage where it was hopeless to think in terms of a negotiated settlement. We intended to continue our utmost to achieve one, and here Mr Thomson described Her Majesty's Government's attitude and activities since the British-sponsored Security Council Resolution of November, 1967, on the lines of his discussions with the President of the National Assembly and the President of the Republic. He added a reference to the representations which H.M. Ambassador had been instructed to make about a claim by the P.F.L.P., datelined from Beirut, to have been the author of various attacks on Jewish-owned property in London.

Mr Karamé spoke about the great difficulty in which a moderate Government like the Lebanese Government was placed in a situation like the present, when feelings were running very high and actual fighting was going on in Israel's other Arab neighbours. It was not easy in such circumstances to justify standing aside. Moreover, the issue was a fundamental one, of grave historic

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injustice to the Palestine people, an injustice which the U.N. and the great powers seemed to be unable or unwilling to put right; indeed, the latest U.S. proposals made it clear that their policy was to give full backing to Israeli intransigence and to ignore the rights of the Palestinians. The Lebanese had noted with great disappointment that the recent Security Council resolution about the Israeli attacks on Southern Lebanon had put the aggressor on the same moral level as the victim. If the Palestinians could not obtain elementary justice by negotiation and persuasion, they must inevitably have recourse to force. They had, in any case, nothing left to lose except their lives.

Commenting on a reference by Mr Thomson to the Baghdad executions, Mr Karamé replied to the effect that a country engaged in a war in which its very existence was at stake could not be expected to be gentle towards its enemies.

ANNEX "D"

Call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, 29 August, 1969

After the usual courtesies, Mr Salem launched straight into a complaint that the Western Powers seemed unwilling to give a helping hand to the Lebanon, which was in grave difficulties, not only because of Israel, but also as a result of a concerted and determined attempt by "progressive" Arab governments, with the Soviet Union behind them, to detatch her from her connections with the West and incorporate her in their bloc. The Soviet Ambassador had been to see him twice recently to ask why the Lebanon did not follow the example of the U.A.R., Syria, Iraq and others by giving diplomatic recognition to the German Democratic Republic. He and his like-minded colleagues would resist this to the utmost, but what could the Lebanon do against the combined strength of its Arab "brethren" - who were in fact more dangerous than Israel? At the recent Cairo meeting he had, against strong opposition, insisted on registering reservations about freedom of action for the fedayeen. News of this was being leaked to the Lebanese Press with great caution in the hope of avoiding an uproar. The trickiness of the situation in the Lebanon was illustrated by the clash which had taken place on the previous day between Palestinian refugees near Tripoli and the Security Forces; casualties had in fact been substantially more than had been divulged in the Press.

Great Britain, which had been so active two years ago, seemed to have given up trying to prevent any further deterioration in the situation. It was difficult now to believe in the possibility of any peaceful settlement. The Arab Governments concerned (except Syria) had accepted the 1967 Resolution, but Israel had not, and no attempt seemed to have been made by the Western Powers to persuade her to do so. Indeed, the latest U.S.

proposals lent colour to stories that U.S. policy was dictated from Jerusalem. Paradoxically, the effect of Western support for Israel was to favour Israeli and Soviet interests against those of the Arabs and the U.S.A.

Replying to Mr Thomson's suggestion that the Lebanese could surely be reasonably satisfied with the recent unanimous Security Council resolution condemning Israel, Mr Salem asked why, after voting for it, did the Americans have to go out of their way to back Israel over the question of the validity of the Israel/Lebanon Armistice Convention? It was not true that the Lebanon had ever denounced it, and they had not fired a shot in 1967. The Lebanon attached the utmost importance to the Convention, because in their eyes it put the frontier with Israel out of reach of dispute, whereas the 1967 ceasefire agreement, to which the Lebanon was not a party, opened the door to "rectification".

Mr Thomson suggested that the Minister's view of possible developments was somewhat too sombre; the latest indications were that both the U.S. and Soviet Governments still thought that the two-power talks were worth pursuing. Each was acting like an advocate, seeking the most advantageous terms for his client: if the U.S. attitude was really as rigidly pro-Israeli as was suggested, the Russians would hardly have continued the dialogue. Moreover, the Israelis had privately (although admittedly not publicly) indicated their acceptance of the 1967 Resolution as a possible basis for a settlement. (The Minister interjected here [redacted] that if they accepted it, they must say so.) The whole idea of Four-Power talks had been strongly resisted by the Israelis, and Mrs Meir had made great efforts in London to get us to wreck them. But

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we, as well as the Americans, had insisted on them. This surely was not to be described as "backing out" or partiality toward Israel. As regards the Armistice Convention, the British Government regarded the existing Lebanese Israeli frontiers as secure and recognised, and in no need of adjustment.

The Minister was not to be consoled. He still felt that we ought to, and could, do more. He put forward three suggestions:

(a) the Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs had told him during his recent visit to Amman that the Israelis' second destruction and refusal to allow the repair of the East Ghor canal had endangered the livelihood of a considerable population and had asked him to ask the Americans and British to ask the Israelis, on humanitarian grounds, to allow repairs to be made.

(b) We should do our utmost to persuade the Israelis to accept U.N. Observers on their side of the frontier. For their part, and provided this happened, the Lebanese were perfectly happy to agree to a dramatic increase in the number of observers (at present 5 or 6) on their side. This would make things much easier for the Lebanese Government. (The Minister clearly implied that this was because it would make it difficult for the Arab Nationalists to claim that Israeli accusations of fedayeen raids from Lebanese territory were all false.).

(c) Finally, the Minister said that for a long time Lebanon had been asking for landing rights in Hong Kong for one of their civilian airlines.

They would return to the charge in talks which were about to be held between the two governments to review the existing Civil Aviation Agreement. This was surely a small matter for us, but of considerable importance for the Lebanon.

H.M. Ambassador explained that the Agreement was based on reciprocity and that other airlines, notably K.L.M., had been refused landing rights in Hong Kong. The Minister said that what he was asking for was not reciprocity so much as a helpful gesture to the weaker side.

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RECORD OF MEETING between the Minister without Portfolio and the United Arab Republic Minister for Foreign Affairs in Cairo at 7.00 p.m. on 30th AUGUST 1969

Present:

The Rt. Hon. George Thomson, MP
Sir Richard Beaumont
Mr. Hanson

Mr. Mahmud Riad
Mr. Samih Anwar
Mr. Muhammad Riad

After an initial exchange of courtesies Mr. Thomson said how grateful he was to the United Arab Republic Government for their invitation to him as a member of the British Cabinet, to visit the United Arab Republic again in happier circumstances for Anglo/UAR relations. He was very glad to have this opportunity of meeting United Arab Republic leaders and of seeing some of the major achievements of the Egyptians, in particular, the Aswan High Dam. Mr. Riad said that he was glad Mr. Thomson had been able to come; unfortunately discussions had not been completed on his last visit.

The Arab/Israeli Conflict

2. Mr. Thomson said that recently there had been sombre developments in the Middle East situation, in particular the burning of the al Aqsa Mosque, and he wanted to convey condolences on behalf of the British Government. The incident and the reaction to it was added proof of the danger of the situation in the Middle East. What had struck him about British newspaper comment on the incident was the widespread feeling that there was need for international control of the holy places in Jerusalem. Mr. Riad thanked Mr. Thomson for his message. He said the incident had caused very strong feelings in the Arab world and as a result of the recent discussions in Cairo, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and King Hassan of Morocco were proposing to call a conference to discuss the matter further. If the rest of the Muslim world would join in it would be so much the better. Pakistan, Somalia and Malaysia were among those who had already expressed willingness to do so. But it was not an easy question because the governments of some predominantly Muslim countries were not Muslim. India, for instance, with 60 million Muslims, just less than the total Arab world, was not a Muslim state.

3. Mr. Riad said there would be more difficulties. According to the Jews, Jerusalem was the temple and the site of the temple was in their view where the al Aqsa Mosque stood. But when the Mosque was built the site was completely empty. It was impossible to find solutions to current problems by looking far back into history as the Jews did. Over the centuries there had been many empires, Persian, Greek, Roman - and British - but that gave no basis for settling current national boundaries. There was no other solution to the problem of Jerusalem but Israeli withdrawal. The Israelis were now in a corner. There would be a lot of destruction on both sides but in the end there was no question but that they would have to go. They would suffer more and more as time went on. How long they could hold out he did not like to guess.

4. Mr. Thomson said that in Her Majesty's Government's view the best way to make progress was on the basis of the 1967 United Nations resolution. He would be interested to hear what the United Arab Republic Government's views on this now were. He had gained the impression that people felt the British Government had lost interest or, indeed, changed its viewpoint. He could say authoritatively on behalf of his colleagues that Her Majesty's Government's position was exactly the same as when we had taken the lead in drafting the resolution. Our interpretation of the resolution was that the overriding principle was withdrawal from conquered territories: borders between the countries concerned must be secure and duly recognised, but there could be no recognition of borders that were not settled by agreement. The resolution was a package, requiring Israeli withdrawal but at the same time recognising that Israel had a right to exist in peace and security. Her Majesty's Government was trying to use its influence actively. There was no question of inactivity. If the United Arab Republic felt that Her Majesty's Government's attitude was somewhat detached, he would only say that it was better to maintain a certain detachment in order to exercise the maximum influence at the right point. The autumn, after the Meeting of the United Nations Assembly and the Israeli elections, might for instance bring scope for new activity. But the main point he wanted to emphasise was that Britain's position had not changed.

5. Mr. Riad said he was glad to hear this. The United Arab Republic had certainly thought there had been some change in the British position. He wanted to make the United Arab Republic Government's position quite clear. He had been at the United Nations in November 1967 when the resolution had been accepted by his Government. Acceptance had come after he had had several talks with Lord Caradon, in which he (Mr. Riad) had made it clear that his Government's acceptance must entail Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied territories. The draft resolution was vague on the point but Lord Caradon had assured him that in Her Majesty's Government's view it was not and Lord Caradon had referred him to Mr. George Brown's statement to the General Assembly. On another occasion there had been a meeting in the Jordanian delegation of the representatives of all the Arab countries and Lord Caradon had repeated the same assurances to them collectively. Mr. Riad went on to say that it was, of course, clear to them that the resolution was a package and that it involved the recognition of Israel. The United Arab Republic still stood by the position they adopted then. If the Israelis would withdraw from all Arab territories the United Arab Republic would fulfil their obligations under the resolution, even including the recognised boundaries. He would not say "secure" because what was a "secure boundary"? The phrase had no meaning.

6. Mr. Riad said that the United Arab Republic was very anxious for peace in the area. They were ready to wait for another year if there was even a slight hope of implementing the United Nations resolution as they understood it, and not as the Israelis and the Americans understood it. For the latter two it was not a resolution but simply an agenda for talks on borders, refugees, etc. In this course there were all sorts of hazards which the United Arab Republic could not accept. For instance, once the Israelis had the right to limit the numbers of refugees returning, they would honour their obligations by letting in some ridiculously small number such as 100 a year. The whole attitude of the Americans and Israelis was that the Arab states should make concessions all the way to meet Israeli demands, whilst there would be no obligations on Israel. It was for these reasons that no solution had been found to the problem. Mr. Riad added that the United Arab Republic still believed that a just and peaceful political settlement could be achieved on the basis of the resolution. This would be the best for all concerned. It was the only satisfactory solution. Any other solution could only be temporary.

10. Mr. Riad emphasised the difficulty for the United Arab Republic Government in standing by the 1967 resolution. It was very risky for them to defend it to their public opinion but they were prepared to do so for the sake of peace. But if the Israelis insisted on war they gave the United Arab Republic no alternative but to be ready to fight to get rid of the Israeli occupation. They were building a good Army and in two years they could double their forces. There were only some 2 million Israelis against 30 million Egyptians and this indicated the hazard for the Israelis - unless some states were rash enough to give them nuclear weapons and thus lead to a world disaster.

11. Mr. Riad said the United Arab Republic accepted a Jewish state but it must be limited. At present it was like a balloon constantly getting larger. If this went on one day it would explode and nothing would be left of it.

12. The situation now was that the United Arab Republic had lost hope with the Americans. When Governor Scranton was in Cairo they had thought there would be a new American policy, because they thought he was a close friend of Mr. Nixon. But, because he had talked of the "even-handed" policy between Israel and Arabs, he now apparently did not even receive official papers!

13. Mr. Thomson said he was grateful for Mr. Riad's very frank exposé of the United Arab Republic Government's views. It was very valuable to have this authoritative first hand view and he would report it back to his Cabinet colleagues. It was clear that there was agreement between the two Governments that there had got to be a political settlement. The alternatives were the status quo, with all its dangers, and a political settlement. In Her Majesty's Government's view the resolution offered the best hope of a political settlement. Britain had big interests in the Middle East and to this extent both countries were united in a common aim. Her Majesty's Government did not quarrel with the United Arab Republic attitude on aspects of a settlement, e.g. on Sinai. Her Majesty's Government was quite clear that there must be Israeli withdrawal. On Sharm al Shaikh Her Majesty's Government considered there should be a United Nations presence (and not Israeli). On refugees, it was clearly important to make any settlement acceptable to the refugees themselves and they would need to have the choice of repatriation. On the Canal he saw no significant difference with the United Arab Republic line.

Mr. Thomson added that he felt the United Arab Republic perhaps took too gloomy a view of the American position. Action on the resolution was taking a long time but it had to be borne in mind that the American Government had to face a Jewish political lobby of considerable power (and so to a limited extent did the British Government). Originally the Israelis would have nothing to do with the United Nations. They wanted direct negotiations with the Arab states but, despite this and despite Israeli objections to the Four Powers and Two Power talks, the Americans had persisted. Negotiations with the Russians were still at an early stage and it certainly did not seem that all possibilities of a settlement had yet been exhausted. After the Israeli elections the climate for a settlement should be better. Political parties fighting an election often tended to be more extreme in their attitudes than governments. A political settlement based on Israeli withdrawal and acceptance by the Arab countries of a Jewish state with boundaries agreed internationally was essential and Her Majesty's Government was clear that all efforts must be bent towards getting such a package agreed.

14. Mr. Riad said he did not like criticising the Americans and it was misleading to draw comparisons between the positions of the Russians and the Americans. When the Jews usurped Palestine the Americans and Russians had been at one in endorsing their action, whereas Britain had abstained and Russia had attacked Britain for doing so. The Russians had then been against the Arabs. Now they were supplying arms to help the Arabs defend themselves - a totally different position from the Americans who were supplying arms to an aggressor. The Americans should revert to their 1956 attitude. Then the United States Government had persuaded the Governments of Britain, France and Israel to withdraw. It was absurd to argue now that they lacked the means to persuade the weaker of the three - the Israeli Government. He would be very happy if he felt that the Americans were at least neutral. But American support for Israel was not only the Zionist lobby, it was part of American policy for the area. It was regarded as being in the American interest as their intervention in Vietnam had been. The gap between the Arabs and the Americans was getting wider and it was grossly insulting to the United Arab Republic that they should even suggest that there could be Israeli troops at Sharm al Shaikh - with or without Egyptian troops. He would like to be able to bring the Americans to see the United Arab Republic point of view. The door was fully open for this and the United Arab Republic Government felt that Her Majesty's Government could help in bringing pressure to bear on the Americans. The Israelis said that Britain was on the American side.

15. Mr. Thomson said that it was no secret that when Mrs. Meir had been in London in June part of her purpose had been to dissuade Her Majesty's Government from the line he had explained. But she had not succeeded.

Ships in the Suez Canal

16. Mr. Thomson recalled the problem of the ships blocked in the Suez Canal had been raised by Mr. Goronwy Roberts during his visit to the United Arab Republic in January 1969 and he was very conscious that the United Arab Republic Government had sought to be helpful. Although only a few of the ships were British, several others were reinsured in London and there was considerable parliamentary interest in the matter. He would be glad therefore if the United Arab Republic Government could give any further help towards releasing the ships.

17. Mr. Riad said the time was not favourable now. The Israelis were insisting on building fortifications on the other side of the Canal and the United Arab Republic was trying to prevent them. There was, therefore, daily shooting across the Canal. Experience had shown that the Israelis took advantage of the shortest truces for military movements and the United Arab Republic could not contemplate giving them freedom to get on unimpeded with their military plans for several weeks. Indeed the work of removing the ships, including the preliminary survey, could take months. Without a cease-fire it would be dangerous for any work to start. It could be that the Israelis might destroy the ships in order to increase the obstacles in the Canal.

18. Mr. Thomson said he recognised there were difficulties but he had felt bound to raise the question of the ships because of the importance which attached to it in Britain.

Sequestrated Property

19. Mr. Thomson said that there had been helpful progress on the 1956 cases but Her Majesty's Government would like to see a little more and also to see some progress in the 1961 cases. There were less than 50 individuals involved and, whilst he recognised there were many complications, it was important to Her Majesty's Government and to the British Parliament that there should be progress in settling the outstanding cases. If there were difficulties which could be ironed out in bilateral discussions, he would be very glad. Settlement of outstanding claims would be very good for Anglo/UAR relations.

20. Mr. Riad noted Mr. Thomson's points.

Cultural Relations

21. Mr. Thomson said he was encouraged at the good progress made in Anglo/UAR relations in the cultural and technical assistance fields: he himself had signed the Cultural Agreement in 1965. Good results seemed to be coming from it. In particular he was glad to note that the Royal Ballet was about to arrive in Cairo and also to have the opportunity of being present in Cairo at the opening of the British Month in the Millenary Celebrations. Her Majesty's Government would be glad to have suggestions for fields in which United Kingdom assistance would be helpful. Those involved in technical assistance felt their jobs in the United Arab Republic were well worthwhile.

22. Mr. Riad said that bilateral relations between the United Kingdom and United Arab Republic were smooth. There was scope for increased cultural contact, technical assistance and trade. He had expected that the United Kingdom would have been interested in the proposed Suez-Alexandria oil pipeline. In his view it would be a good investment. HM Ambassador said that the haul round the Cape affected the United Kingdom considerably less than, for instance, France and Italy and the pipeline was therefore of less interest to the United Kingdom.

23. Mr. Thomson asked about the oil situation in the United Arab Republic. Mr. Riad said it was encouraging despite the loss of Sinai. Production was expanding in the Gulf of Suez. Oil had been found south of the Qattara depression and the Russians were exploring between Siwa and the Libyan border. The United Arab Republic already had a good surplus for export and this would increase.

The meeting terminated shortly before 9.00 p.m.

Office of the Minister without Portfolio

September 1969

RECORD OF MEETING between the Minister without Portfolio and the United Arab Republic Minister for Foreign Affairs in Cairo at 7.00 p.m. on 30th AUGUST 1969

Present:

The Rt. Hon. George Thomson, MP	Mr. Mahmud Riad
Sir Richard Beaumont	Mr. Samih Anwar
Mr. Hanson	Mr. Muhammad Riad

After an initial exchange of courtesies Mr. Thomson said how grateful he was to the United Arab Republic Government for their invitation to him as a member of the British Cabinet, to visit the United Arab Republic again in happier circumstances for Anglo/UAR relations. He was very glad to have this opportunity of meeting United Arab Republic leaders and of seeing some of the major achievements of the Egyptians, in particular, the Aswan High Dam. Mr. Riad said that he was glad Mr. Thomson had been able to come; unfortunately discussions had not been completed on his last visit.

The Arab/Israeli Conflict

2. Mr. Thomson said that recently there had been sombre developments in the Middle East situation, in particular the burning of the al Aqsa Mosque, and he wanted to convey condolences on behalf of the British Government. The incident and the reaction to it was added proof of the danger of the situation in the Middle East. What had struck him about British newspaper comment on the incident was the widespread feeling that there was need for international control of the holy places in Jerusalem. Mr. Riad thanked Mr. Thomson for his message. He said the incident had caused very strong feelings in the Arab world and as a result of the recent discussions in Cairo, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and King Hassan of Morocco were proposing to call a conference to discuss the matter further. If the rest of the Muslim world would join in it would be so much the better. Pakistan, Somalia and Malaysia were among those who had already expressed willingness to do so. But it was not an easy question because the governments of some predominantly Muslim countries were not Muslim. India, for instance, with 60 million Muslims, just less than the total Arab world, was not a Muslim state.

3. Mr. Riad said there would be more difficulties. According to the Jews, Jerusalem was the temple and the site of the temple was in their view where the al Aqsa Mosque stood. But when the Mosque was built the site was completely empty. It was impossible to find solutions to current problems by looking far back into history as the Jews did. Over the centuries there had been many empires, Persian, Greek, Roman - and British - but that gave no basis for settling current national boundaries. There was no other solution to the problem of Jerusalem but Israeli withdrawal. The Israelis were now in a corner. There would be a lot of destruction on both sides but in the end there was no question but that they would have to go. They would suffer more and more as time went on. How long they could hold out he did not like to guess.

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Cultural Relations

21. Mr. Thomson said he was encouraged at the good progress made in Anglo/UAR relations in the cultural and technical assistance fields: he himself had signed the Cultural Agreement in 1965. Good results seemed to be coming from it. In particular he was glad to note that the Royal Ballet was about to arrive in Cairo and also to have the opportunity of being present in Cairo at the opening of the British Month in the Millenary Celebrations. Her Majesty's Government would be glad to have suggestions for fields in which United Kingdom assistance would be helpful. Those involved in technical assistance felt their jobs in the United Arab Republic were well worthwhile.

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The meeting terminated shortly before 9.00 p.m.

Office of the Minister without Portfolio

September 1969

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Present:

The Rt. Hon. George Thomson, MP
Sir Richard Beaumont
Mr. Hanson

Mr. Mahmud Riad
Mr. Samih Anwar
Mr. Muhammad Riad

After an initial exchange of courtesies Mr. Thomson said how grateful he was to the United Arab Republic Government for their invitation to him as a member of the British Cabinet, to visit the United Arab Republic again in happier circumstances for Anglo/UAR relations. He was very glad to have this opportunity of meeting United Arab Republic leaders and of seeing some of the major achievements of the Egyptians, in particular, the Aswan High Dam. Mr. Riad said that he was glad Mr. Thomson had been able to come; unfortunately discussions had not been completed on his last visit.

The Arab/Israeli Conflict

2. Mr. Thomson said that recently there had been sombre developments in the Middle East situation, in particular the burning of the al Aqsa Mosque, and he wanted to convey condolences on behalf of the British Government. The incident and the reaction to it was added proof of the danger of the situation in the Middle East. What had struck him about British newspaper comment on the incident was the widespread feeling that there was need for international control of the holy places in Jerusalem. Mr. Riad thanked Mr. Thomson for his message. He said the incident had caused very strong feelings in the Arab world and as a result of the recent discussions in Cairo, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and King Hassan of Morocco were proposing to call a conference to discuss the matter further. If the rest of the Muslim world would join in it would be so much the better. Pakistan, Somalia and Malaysia were among those who had already expressed willingness to do so. But it was not an easy question because the governments of some predominantly Muslim countries were not Muslim. India, for instance, with 60 million Muslims, just less than the total Arab world, was not a Muslim state.

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11. Mr. Riad said the United Arab Republic accepted a Jewish state but it must be limited. At present it was like a balloon constantly getting larger. If this went on one day it would explode and nothing would be left of it.

12. The situation now was that the United Arab Republic had lost hope with the Americans. When Governor Scranton was in Cairo they had thought there would be a new American policy, because they thought he was a close friend of Mr. Nixon. But, because he had talked of the "even-handed" policy between Israel and Arabs, he now apparently did not even receive official papers!

13. Mr. Thomson said he was grateful for Mr. Riad's very frank exposé of the United Arab Republic Government's views. It was very valuable to have this authoritative first hand view and he would report it back to his Cabinet colleagues. It was clear that there was agreement between the two Governments that there had got to be a political settlement. The alternatives were the status quo, with all its dangers, and a political settlement. In Her Majesty's Government's view the resolution offered the best hope of a political settlement. Britain had big interests in the Middle East and to this extent both countries were united in a common aim. Her Majesty's Government did not quarrel with the United Arab Republic attitude on aspects of a settlement, e.g. on Sinai. Her Majesty's Government was quite clear that there must be Israeli withdrawal. On Sharm al Shaikh Her Majesty's Government considered there should be a United Nations presence (and not Israeli). On refugees, it was clearly important to make any settlement acceptable to the refugees themselves and they would need to have the choice of repatriation. On the Canal he saw no significant difference with the United Arab Republic line.

Mr. Thomson added that he felt the United Arab Republic perhaps took too gloomy a view of the American position. Action on the resolution was taking a long time but it had to be borne in mind that the American Government had to face a Jewish political lobby of considerable power (and so to a limited extent did the British Government). Originally the Israelis would have nothing to do with the United Nations. They wanted direct negotiations with the Arab states but, despite this and despite Israeli objections to the Four Powers and Two Power talks, the Americans had persisted. Negotiations with the Russians were still at an early stage and it certainly did not seem that all possibilities of a settlement had yet been exhausted. After the Israeli elections the climate for a settlement should be better. Political parties fighting an election often tended to be more extreme in their attitudes than governments. A political settlement based on Israeli withdrawal and acceptance by the Arab countries of a Jewish state with boundaries agreed internationally was essential and Her Majesty's Government was clear that all efforts must be bent towards getting such a package agreed.

14. Mr. Riad said he did not like criticising the Americans and it was misleading to draw comparisons between the positions of the Russians and the Americans. When the Jews usurped Palestine the Americans and Russians had been at one in endorsing their action, whereas Britain had abstained and Russia had attacked Britain for doing so. The Russians had then been against the Arabs. Now they were supplying arms to help the Arabs defend themselves - a totally different position from the Americans who were supplying arms to an aggressor. The Americans should revert to their 1956 attitude. Then the United States Government had persuaded the Governments of Britain, France and Israel to withdraw. It was absurd to argue now that they lacked the means to persuade the weaker of the three - the Israeli Government. He would be very happy if he felt that the Americans were at least neutral. But American support for Israel was not only the Zionist lobby, it was part of American policy for the area. It was regarded as being in the American interest as their intervention in Vietnam had been. The gap between the Arabs and the Americans was getting wider and it was grossly insulting to the United Arab Republic that they should even suggest that there could be Israeli troops at Sharm al Shaikh - with or without Egyptian troops. He would like to be able to bring the Americans to see the United Arab Republic point of view. The door was fully open for this and the United Arab Republic Government felt that Her Majesty's Government could help in bringing pressure to bear on the Americans. The Israelis said that Britain was on the American side.

15. Mr. Thomson said that it was no secret that when Mrs. Meir had been in London in June part of her purpose had been to dissuade Her Majesty's Government from the line he had explained. But she had not succeeded.

Ships in the Suez Canal

16. Mr. Thomson recalled the problem of the ships blocked in the Suez Canal had been raised by Mr. Goronwy Roberts during his visit to the United Arab Republic in January 1969 and he was very conscious that the United Arab Republic Government had sought to be helpful. Although only a few of the ships were British, several others were reinsured in London and there was considerable parliamentary interest in the matter. He would be glad therefore if the United Arab Republic Government could give any further help towards releasing the ships.

17. Mr. Riad said the time was not favourable now. The Israelis were insisting on building fortifications on the other side of the Canal and the United Arab Republic was trying to prevent them. There was, therefore, daily shooting across the Canal. Experience had shown that the Israelis took advantage of the shortest truces for military movements and the United Arab Republic could not contemplate giving them freedom to get on unimpeded with their military plans for several weeks. Indeed the work of removing the ships, including the preliminary survey, could take months. Without a cease-fire it would be dangerous for any work to start. It could be that the Israelis might destroy the ships in order to increase the obstacles in the Canal.

18. Mr. Thomson said he recognised there were difficulties but he had felt bound to raise the question of the ships because of the importance which attached to it in Britain.

Sequestrated Property

19. Mr. Thomson said that there had been helpful progress on the 1956 cases but Her Majesty's Government would like to see a little more and also to see some progress in the 1961 cases. There were less than 50 individuals involved and, whilst he recognised there were many complications, it was important to Her Majesty's Government and to the British Parliament that there should be progress in settling the outstanding cases. If there were difficulties which could be ironed out in bilateral discussions, he would be very glad. Settlement of outstanding claims would be very good for Anglo/UAR relations.

20. Mr. Riad noted Mr. Thomson's points.

Cultural Relations

21. Mr. Thomson said he was encouraged at the good progress made in Anglo/UAR relations in the cultural and technical assistance fields: he himself had signed the Cultural Agreement in 1965. Good results seemed to be coming from it. In particular he was glad to note that the Royal Ballet was about to arrive in Cairo and also to have the opportunity of being present in Cairo at the opening of the British Month in the Millenary Celebrations. Her Majesty's Government would be glad to have suggestions for fields in which United Kingdom assistance would be helpful. Those involved in technical assistance felt their jobs in the United Arab Republic were well worthwhile.

22. Mr. Riad said that bilateral relations between the United Kingdom and United Arab Republic were smooth. There was scope for increased cultural contact, technical assistance and trade. He had expected that the United Kingdom would have been interested in the proposed Suez-Alexandria oil pipeline. In his view it would be a good investment. HM Ambassador said that the haul round the Cape affected the United Kingdom considerably less than, for instance, France and Italy and the pipeline was therefore of less interest to the United Kingdom.

23. Mr. Thomson asked about the oil situation in the United Arab Republic. Mr. Riad said it was encouraging despite the loss of Sinai. Production was expanding in the Gulf of Suez. Oil had been found south of the Qattara depression and the Russians were exploring between Siwa and the Libyan border. The United Arab Republic already had a good surplus for export and this would increase.

The meeting terminated shortly before 9.00 p.m.

Office of the Minister without Portfolio

September 1969

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TO FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

10TH SEPT., 1969

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Minister without Portfolio

RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE THOMSON, M.P., MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO, AND PRESIDENT GAMAL ABDUL NASSER AT MANCHIET EL BAKHRI ON 3RD SEPTEMBER, 1969.

Present

Rt. Hon George Thomson MP
Richard Beaumont

President Nasser
Mr Mahmud Riad

1. MR. THOMSON ---------- EXPRESSED HIS THANKS TO THE PRESIDENT FOR THE INVITATION TO VISIT THE UAR AND HIS ENJOYMENT AT THE WAY THE VISIT HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT. HE SAID THAT HIS VISIT TO ASWAN FOLLOWED BY A TRAIN JOURNEY TO LUXOR IN THE EARLY MORNING HAD GIVEN HIM A VERY GOOD PICTURE OF ANCIENT AND MODERN EGYPT. HE SUPPOSED THAT THE ELECTRICITY BEING GENERATED FROM THE HIGH DAM WAS ALREADY BEING USED WIDELY IN EGYPT.

PRESIDENT NASSER ---------- SAID THAT THE HIGH DAM IN FACT HAD CREATED MORE ELECTRICITY THAN THE UAR GOVERNMENT AT PRESENT USED BUT THAT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED WITH THE USSR FOR AN ALUMINIUM AND PHOSPHORUS PLANT AND OTHER FACTORIES WHICH COULD ABSORB SPARE ELECTRICAL CAPACITY. HE SAID THAT IT WAS INTENDED TO BUILD A SERIES OF SMALLER BARRAGES FURTHER DOWN THE NILE WHICH WOULD GIVE YET MORE ELECTRICAL POWER.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM MR.THOMSON PRESIDENT NASSER SAID THAT THE VILLAGE ELECTRIFICATION SCHEME WHICH HAD BEEN GOING SLOW SINCE 1965 WAS NOW BEING STARTED UP AGAIN AND THAT IT WAS HOPED THAT A FURTHER ONE HUNDRED VILLAGES WOULD BE RECEIVING ELECTRICITY IN THE COURSE OF THE YEAR.

MR.THOMSON ---------- REMARKED THAT THE ADVENT OF ELECTRICITY CHANGED THE WHOLE ASPECT OF VILLAGE LIFE AND PRESIDENT NASSER ---------- AGREED.

HE SAID THAT IT WAS HOPED THAT THE BRINGING OF ELECTRICITY TO THE VILLAGES WOULD HAVE SOME IMPACT ON THE BIRTHRATE AND THAT IN ADDITION TO ELECTRICITY HE WOULD BE VERY MUCH IN FAVOUR OF INTRODUCING CHEAP TELEVISION, WHICH WOULD CHANGE THE HABITS OF THE PEASANTS FROM THEIR PRESENT WAY OF LIFE, WHICH CONSISTED OF COMING IN FROM THE FIELDS, EATING AT SUNDOWN, AND THEN GOING TO BED AND PROCREATING CHILDREN.

MR.THOMSON ---------- REMARKED THAT HE NOTICED THAT IN THE LOCAL OFFICES OF THE ARAB SOCIALIST UNION THERE WERE FACILITIES FOR WATCHING TELEVISION AND IF SETS WERE EXPENSIVE SURELY THEY COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE IN CAFES AND OTHER MEETING PLACES. THE PRESIDENT

AGREED. HE SAID THAT HE ALSO HOPED THAT THE MINISTER OF CULTURE WOULD BE ABLE TO SET UP ''PALACES OF CULTURE'' WHICH DESPITE THE RATHER POMPOUS-SOUNDING NAME WOULD IN FACT BE PLACES WHERE PEOPLE COULD GATHER TO WATCH TELEVISION OR A MOBILE CINEMA SHOW, OR MAKE USE OF A SMALL LIBRARY.

MR.THOMSON

---------- AGREED THAT THE CHANGE OF SOCIAL HABITS MIGHT WELL HAVE AN IMPORTANT EFFECT ON THE POPULATION PROBLEM, WHICH THE PRESIDENT SAID WAS INCREASING AT THE RATE OF A MILLION A YEAR. PRESIDENT NASSER

---------- THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE UAR HAD FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIRTY YEARS A CREDIT BALANCE IN ITS FOREIGN TRADE AND THAT THIS WAS THE RESULT OF GROWING INDUSTRIALISATION . THERE WERE QUITE A VARIETY OF EXPORTS NOW BEING SENT ABROAD- TYRES, REFRIGERATORS, AND VARIOUS OTHER THINGS -ALL OF WHICH MEANT THAT SOME OF THE STATE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES WOULD BE AUTO-FINANCING IN SO FAR AS THEIR FOREIGN EXCHANGE REQUIREMENTS WERE CONCERNED.

2. MR.THOMSON

---------- REMARKED THAT IN CONNECTION WITH OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS THERE WAS A GRATIFYING STRENGTHENING OF CULTURAL TIES AND THAT THERE SEEMED TO BE FEW PROBLEMS.

3 PRESIDENT NASSER

---------- THEN ASKED MR.THOMSON IF HE HAD BEEN TO THE UAR BEFORE AND MR.THOMSON SAID THAT HE HAD, BUT IT FELL AT AN UNFORTUNATE MOMENT. PRESIDENT NASSER THEN SAID THAT HE HAD ASKED THIS QUESTION BECAUSE HE REMEMBERED THE OCCASION, BUT HAD ALSO READ IN THE NEWSPAPERS THAT ON THE PRESENT OCCASION MR.THOMSON HAD COME TO DISCUSS COMMERCE AND CULTURE BUT NOT POLITICAL AFFAIRS, AND HE WONDERED WHETHER THIS WAS REALLY SO. MR.THOMSON SAID THAT IT MOST EMPHATICALLY WAS NOT.

HE WAS VERY ANXIOUS TO DISCUSS POLITICAL AFFAIRS.

PRESIDENT NASSER ---------- THEN SAID THAT THE POLICY OF THE UAR GOVERNMENT CONTINUED TO BE BASED ON A POLITICAL SOLUTION OF THE ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM, AND THAT FOR SUCH A SOLUTION THERE WERE TWO ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS. THE FIRST OF THESE WAS THAT THE ISRAELIS SHOULD EVACUATE ALL THE TERRITORY THEY HAD TAKEN BY FORCE IN 1967. THIS WAS THE MEANING OF RESOLUTION 242 AND THERE COULD BE NO QUESTION OF ACCEPTING THE ISRAELI INTERPRETATION THAT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WORDS ''WITHDRAWAL FROM TERRITORIES'' AND ''WITHDRAWAL FROM THE TERRITORIES'' MEANT THAT ISRAEL WAS ENTITLED TO MAINTAIN ITSELF IN OCCUPATION OF ANY OF THE TERRITORIES TAKEN FROM THE ARABS IN 1952. INDEED, PRESIDENT NASSER SAID, IF THE ISRAELIS WERE TO OFFER TO EVACUATE THE WHOLE OF SINAI PROVIDED THAT THE UAR WOULD AGREE TO THEM REMAINING IN SOLE POSSESSION OF JERUSALEM, HE WOULD NEVER CONSENT.HE WOULD RATHER PUT UP WITH AN ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF SINAI FOR A FURTHER TEN YEARS IF NECESSARY . THE SECOND QUESTION WAS THE QUESTION OF THE PALESTINIANS AND THEIR RIGHTS ACCORDING TO THE VARIOUS UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS. ON BOTH THESE QUESTIONS THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE HAD BEEN VERY DISAPPOINTING. THEY HAD IN EFFECT TAKEN UP THE ISRAELI STANDPOINT, AND INDEED THEIR MEMORANDA OF 13 AND 14 POINTS CONTAINED PHRASES LIFTED FROM MR.EBAN'S DECLARATIONS. THEY HAD IN FACTSTARTED AT A POSITION MORE FAVOURABLE TO ISRAEL AND LESS FAVOURABLE TO THE ARABS THEN THAT CONTAINED IN RESOLUTION 242.

PRESIDENT NASSER ---------- SAID THAT THE TOTAL COMMITMENT OF THE AMERICANS TO THE ISRAELI CAUSE WAS DEMONSTRATED BY THE DECISION TO SUPPLY PHANTOMS BEFORE THERE WAS ANY SIGN OF ISRAELI WILLINGLESS TO COMPLY WITH RESOLUTION 242. HE WENT ON

TO SAY THAT HE HIMSELF WAS GOING TO THE SOVIET UNION SHORTLY AND HE WOULD CERTAINLY BE ASKING THE RUSSIANS TO PROVIDE HIM WITH THEIR ANSWER TO THE PHANTOM, WHICH THE UAR DID NOT POSSESS. HE SAID THAT ESCALATION OF THIS KIND, RESULTING FROM UNITED STATES POLICY, WAS ABSURD. NEVERTHE LESS, PRESIDENT NASSER CONTINUED , THE UAR STILL HOPED FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. HE HAD BEEN SEVERELY CRITICISED FOR THIS, EVEN BY THE HEADS OF STATE MEETING IN CAIRO AT THE PRESENT TIME AND EARLIER BY THE CONGRESS OF THE ARAB SOCIALIST UNION, WHO APPEARED TO THINK THAT ''AN INDIGNITY'' WAS INVOLVED. HE HIMSELF DID NOT LOOK AT IT IN THIS LIGHT. HE SAW THAT THE UAR WAS IN THE FRONT LINE AND THAT ALTHOUGH IN ANY HOSTILITIES SEVERE LOSSES IN MEN AND MATERIAL WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE INFLICTED ON THE ISRAELIS, MILITARY AND CIVILIAN, THE UAR AND ITS SONS AND DAUGHTERS WOULD EQUALLY SUFFER. WIDE-SCALE HOSTILITIES WOULD SET BACK THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY. THEREFORE, ALTHOUGH MAKING MILITARY PREPARATIONS, IT WAS LOGICAL TO HOPE THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY.

MR.THOMSON SAID

---------- THAT THERE APPEARED TO HAVE GROWN UP AN IMPRESSION THAT BRITISH POLICY ON RESOLUTION 242 HAD LIKEWISE CHANGED IN A SENSE LESS FAVOURABLE TO THE ARABS SINCE NOVEMBER, 1967. HE COULD TELL PRESIDENT NASSER WITH AUTHORITY THAT THIS WAS, IN FACT,NOT SO. THE BASIS OF THE BRITISH POSITION REMAINED THE SAME. IT WAS THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DID NOT CONSIDER THAT ISRAEL WAS ENTITLED TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION OF TERRITORY ACQUIRED BY WAR. THIS WAS THE FIRST AND OVERRIDING PROVISION. THE SECOND PROVISION WAS THAT THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES MUST BE SECURE AND RECOGNISED. THIS MEANT THAT ANY CHANGES TO THE FRONTIERS BEFORE THE JUNE WAR MUST BE FIXED BY AGREEMENT BETWEEN BOTH THE PARTIES.

PRESIDENT NASSER

---------- HERE INTERJECTED THAT WHILE HE INSISTED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF NO ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY AS A RESULT OF WAR THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT RECTIFICATION OF BOUNDARIES, SUCH AS THE REUNIFICATION OF VILLAGES WITH THEIR LAND OR THEIR WATER SUPPLIES WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE AS A PART OF A PROCESS OF RATIONALISATION FINAL BOUNDARIES.

MR.THOMSON

---------- CONTINUED THAT THE QUESTION OF SECURE BOUNDARIES ENTAILED THE RECOGNITION OF THE EXISTENCE OF A JEWISH STATE. HE SAID THAT HE HAD MET PALESTINIANS IN BEIRUT WHO FELT THAT THE JEWISH STATE SHOULD NOT EXIST: ONLY A PALESTINIAN STATE COMPRISING ARAB AND JEWISH SECTIONS. THIS HE CONSIDERED UNREALISTIC AT THE OUTSET, THOUGH IT MIGHT COME ABOUT LATER. PRESIDENT NASSER SIGNIFIED HIS AGREEMENT. MR.THOMSON THEN CONTINUED THAT IN RELATION TO SECURITY, H.M.GOVERNMENT WERE OF THE OPINION THAT A UNITED NATIONS PRESENCE ON A MORE OR LESS PERMANENT BASIS AT SHARM EL SHAIKH WAS A NECESSITY. PRESIDENT NASSER DID NOT DISAGREE. NEXT, MR.THOMSON SAID THAT H.M.GOVT. AGREED THAT A SOLUTION TO THE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS WAS A VITAL PART OF THE SETTLEMENT AND, FINALLY, THAT THE WHOLE SETTLEMENT AS OUTLINED IN RESOLUTION 242 WAS A PACKAGE.

PRESIDENT NASSER

---------- SAID THAT HE AGREED WITH ALL THIS BUT THAT IN POINT OF FACT IF THERE WAS AN END TO BELLIGERENCY ON THE BASIS OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND A SETTLEMENT OF THE PROBLEM OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, MOST OF THE OTHER PROVISIONS WERE IRRELEVANT. FOR INSTANCE, IF THE ISRAELIS WITHDREW AND THE STATE OF BELLIGERENCY CAME TO AN END THERE WOULD, IN FACT, BE NO NEED FOR ANY GARRISON IN SHARM EL SHAIKH. ITS PRESENCE THERE WOULD BE IRRELEVANT BUT IF BELLIGERENCY DID NOT COME TO

AN END A UNITED NATIONS OR ANY OTHER GARRISON AT SHARM EL SHAIKH WOULD NOT GUARANTEE ISRAEL ACCESS TO EILATH BECAUSE IT WAS PERFECTLY POSSIBLE FOR THE UAR OPERATING FROM PORT SAID, SAUDI ARABIA AND SOUTH YEMEN TO PREVENT THE ACCESS OF ISRAELI SHIPPING TO THE RED SEA AT THE SOUTH END. LIKEWISE IF BELLIGERENCY CAME TO AN END MANY OF THE OTHER DIFFICULTIES WHICH ISRAEL COUNTED TODAY WOULD BE RESOLVED. ISRAEL WOULD BE PART OF THE MIDDLE EAST SCENE AND IT WAS PERFECTLY CONCEIVABLE THAT IN A YEAR OR TWO THE UAR WOULD BE IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, WHICH WOULD AFTER ALL CONTAIN A LARGE ARAB POPULATION, AND ISRAEL MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN THE JEWISH POPULATION IN THE UAR. 7. MR. THOMSON

SAID THAT THIS WAS SO BUT THAT THE LACK OF CONFIDENCE BRED OF TWENTY YEARS OF HOSTILITY WAS SUCH THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD FEEL IN NEED OF GUARANTEES AND THE PUTTING INTO PRACTICE OF THESE GUARANTEES WOULD CALL FOR SACRIFICES FROM BOTH SIDES. MR. THOMSON

--- ADDED THAT OF COURSE THE PALESTINE GUERILLA MOVEMENT WAS A NEW FACTOR IN THE SITUATION. 8 PRESIDENT NASSER

SAID THAT IT CERTAINLY WAS AND THAT ALTHOUGH IT WAS QUITE CERTAIN THAT THE PALESTINE GUERILLAS COULD NEVER LIBERATE THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND FORCE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND INDEED WOULD NEVER BE MORE THAN A NUISANCE TO ISRAEL, ONE SHOULD NOT IGNORE THE FACT THAT THERE WAS A VERY STRONG PSYCHOLOGICAL FEELING AMONG PALESTINIANS IMPELLING THEM TO MAKE SACRIFICES FOR THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE BEYOND ANYTHING THAT HAD HITHERTO BEEN SEEN. HE HIMSELF KNEW OF YOUNG PALESTINIANS AT THE UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO WHO HAD GIVEN UP THEIR COURSES IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESISTANCE. THE RESISTANCE THUS WAS A PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR WHICH MUST BE SERIOUSLY TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION AND THE PALESTINE REFUGEE PROBLEM MUST BE DEALT WITH ACCORDINGLY.

MR.THOMSON

8

---------- SAID THAT SUCH ACTIONS AS THAT TAKEN BY THE P.F.L.P. IN HIJACKING AN AMERICAN PLANE MIGHT BE SPECTACULAR BUT THEY WERE ACTS OF PIRACY AND WOULD ALIENATE WORLD OPINION.

PRESIDENT NASSER

---------- AGREED. HE SAID THE P.F.L.P. HAD A PURPOSE IN TAKING THE PLANE TO DAMASCUS, NAMELY, TO EMBARRASS THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT. THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT DID NOT RECOGNISE THE P.F.L.P., AND ITS LEADER, GEORGES HABBASH, HAD BEEN IMPRISONED IN SYRIA AND HAD ESCAPED. HE THEREFORE HAD A PERSONAL/GRUDGE AGAINST THE SYRIAN REGIME AND WAS TRYING TO SHOW IT WAS NOT DOING ENOUGH TO HELP THE PALESTINE CAUSE.

9. MR.THOMSON

---------- ASKED PRESIDENT NASSER WHAT WAS HIS NEWS FROM LIBYA. PRESIDENT NASSER

---------- SAID THAT THE REVOLUTION IN LIBYA HAD COME AS A COMPLETE SURPRISE. IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN ASSUMED IN CAIRO THAT A REVOLUTION WOULD TAKE PLACE THERE BUT THAT IT HAD EQUALLY BEEN ASSUMED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE UNTIL AFTER THE DEATH OF KING IDRIS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD HAD NO IDEA WHO THE LEADERS OF THE REVOLUTION WERE AND HAD BEEN MAKING ENQUIRIES. IT NOW TURNED OUT THAT THEY WERE ARAB NATIONALISTS AND NEITHER COMMUNISTS NOR BA'ATHISTS. THE PRINCIPLE LEADER WHOM HE BELIEVED WAS BOU SHUWRAIB OR SOME SUCH NAME HAD, HE ALSO DISCOVERED, BEENTRAINED IN THE MILITARY ACADEMY IN CAIRO. IT APPEARED THAT THEY HAD BEEN ENTIRELY SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR REVOLUTION. HE ADDED THAT HE SAID THIS NOT ON THE BASIS OF THE STATEMENTS PUT OUT BY THE REVOLUTIONARY LEADERS THEMSELVES BUT ON THE BASIS OF INTENSIVE RADIO MONITORING WHICH THE UAR SECURITY SERVICES HAD PUT INTO EFFECT DIRECTLY THE REVOLUTION BECAME KNOWN, AS A RESULT OF WHICH THEY HAD BEEN ABLE TO PICK UP POLICE AND ARMY MESSAGES FROM THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF LIBYA

AND MAKE AN HOURLY ASSESSMENT OF THE WAY IN WHICH THE REVOLUTION WAS BEING CONSOLIDATED. IT WAS CLEAR FROM THESE THAT THERE HAD BEEN VERY LITTLE RESISTANCE INDEED. THE ONLY PLACE WHERE THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN SOME WAS FEZZAN AND THAT HAD BEEN SWIFTLY OVERCOME. FOR THIS REASON THE UAR HAD DECIDED TO RECOGNISE THE NEW REGIME.

PRESIDENT NASSER

---------- WENT ON TO REMARK THAT IN VIEW OF THE NATURE OF THE LEADERS OF THE REVOLUTION AND THE EASE WITH ~~WHICH~~ THEY APPPEARED TO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THEIR AIM, ANY OUTSIDE INTERVENTION IN LIBYA, FROM WHATEVER QUARTER, WOULD SEEM LIKELY TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE RATHER THAN BETTER.

MR MAHMUD RIAD

---------- INTERPOLATED THAT EVEN THE CROWN PRINCE HAD EXPRESSED HIS SUPPORT FOR THE MOVEMENT AND

PRESIDENT NASSER

---------- SAID THAT WHEN VISITING THE REVOLUTIONARY HEADQUARTERS THE UAR AMBASSADOR HAD SEEN THE VARIOUS MINISTERS AND EX-MINISTERS, WHO SAID THAT THEY HAD DECIDED TO SUPPORT THE NEW REGIME.

PRESIDENT NASSER

---------- SAID THAT ONE OF THE SIGNIFICANT TRAITS OF THE LIBYAN REVOLUTION WAS THAT DURING THE DEMONSTRATIONS ON THE SECOND AND THRID DAYS SOME MEMBERS OF THE CROWD HAD TO CALL OUT QUITE CLEARLY 'LONG LIVE THE PALESTINE RESISTANCE'

IT WAS EVIDENT THAT THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE WAS ONE WHICH AFFECTED YOUTH THROUGHOUT THE ARAB WORLD AND ON WHICH THERE WERE NO SOFT-LINERS.

10. PRESIDENT NASSER THEN READ FROM A TELEGRAM WHICH HE HAD BEEN HANDED IN THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION WHICH WAS ON THE SAME LINES AS THE BROADCAST REPORTED IN BENGHAZI TELNO 237 TO THE EFFECT THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY OFFICERS CONSIDERED THAT SHALHI IN GOING TO LONDON ON BEHALF OF THE KING WAS ACTING IN A TREACHEROUS MANNER AND THAT THEY WERE SURPRISED AT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT RECEIVING HIM. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WENT ON TO SAY THAT SHALHI HAD BEEN STRIPPED OF ALL HIS OFFICES AND THAT IF HM GOVERNMENT CONTINUED TO SEE HIM THEY BORE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SO DOING.

MR THOMSON ---------- SAID THAT IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES IT WAS INCONCEIVABLE THAT HM GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT RECEIVE MR SHALHI IF HE WENT TO LONDON AS THE EMISSARY OF KING IDRIS AND, AFTER SOME THOUGHT,

PRESIDENT NASSER ---------- SAID THAT EQUALLY IF KING IDRIS HAD SENT AN EMISSARY TO HIM HE WOULD FEEL BOUND TO RECEIVE HIM. HE SAID THAT DOUBTLESS THE UAR AMBASSADOR IN TRIPOLI HAD SENT THE TELEGRAM IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT MR THOMSON WAS IN CAIRO AND THAT HE HOPED THAT MR THOMSON WOULD INFORM HM GOVERNMENT.

MR THOMSON ---------- SAID HE WOULD, AND AFTER SOME DISCUSSION IT WAS AGREED THAT THE UAR MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WOULD SEND A TELEGRAM INFORMING THEIR AMBASSADOR THAT MR THOMSON HAD BEEN TOLD OF THESE REPRESENTATIONS AND INSTRUCTING HIM TO URGE THE REVOLUTIONARY OFFICERS NOT TO BE TOO SENSITIVE ON THIS SUBJECT.

11. PRESIDENT NASSER ---------- SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT, GIVEN THE SUCCESS OF THE REVOLUTION, HM GOVERNMENT WOULD DO SOMETHING TO ALLAY THE MISGIVINGS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY OFFICERS. HE SAID THAT AS A FORMER REVOLUTIONARY HIMSELF HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE FEELINGS OF ANXIETY AND NERVOUSNESS, COMBINED PROBABLY WITH ACUTE SLEEP-

LESSNESS. HE FELT SURE THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN BRITAIN AND LIBYA SHOULD CONTINUE. THE NEW REGIME IN LIBYA WOULD STILL NEED TO SELL ITS OIL TO THE WEST AND UNLIKE THE UAR WHICH WAS GENERATING A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CAPITAL, LIBYA WOULD REQUIRE WESTERN CAPITAL FOR A FURTHER OIL INVESTMENT. INDEED, HE SAID, EVEN IN THE UAR IN THE FIELD OF OIL THE UAR GOVERNMENT HAD MADE AN EXCEPTION AND ENCOURAGED AMERICAN CAPITAL (PHILLIPS AND PAN AMERICAN) TO PARTICIPATE IN OIL PROSPECTION.

11

MR THOMSON

---------- ASKED WHETHER ANY MEMBER OF THE LIBYAN REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL WAS LIKELY TO TRY TO JOIN IN THE FOUR POWER TALKS.

12 PRESIDENT NASSER

---------- LAUGHED AND SAID IT WAS UNLIKELY. SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE, HE WOULD SAY THAT AT ANY MOMENT THEY WERE MUCH TOO TERRIFIED TO LEAVE THEIR OFFICES LET ALONE THE COUNTRY.

MR THOMSON

---------- ASKED THE PRESIDENT WHAT HAD BEEN AGREED AT THE 'LITTLE SUMMIT' WITH THE SYRIANS JORDANIANS AND IRAQIS. THE PRESIDENT REFERRED TO MR MAHMUD RIAD WHO, HE SAID, HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COMMUNIQUE.

MR RIAD

------- MUTTERED SOMETHING TO THE EFFECT THAT THE COMMUNIQUE WOULD SAY THAT THEY HAD REACHED TOTAL AGREEMENT, TO WHICH THE PRESIDENT ADDED WITH A LAUGH THAT NEEDLESS TO SAY WHAT THE COMMUNIQUE SAID DID NOT IN FACT REPRESENT IN ANY WAY WHAT HAD BEEN AGREED

13. MR THOMSON

---------- REVERTING TO THE QUESTION OF BILATERAL RELATIONS SAID THAT THERE WERE TWO POINTS WHICH HE FELT HE SHOULD RAISE IN THAT THEY COVERED THE VIEWS OF THE BRITISH PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENT ON THE UAR. THE ONE WAS THE NEED FOR THE RELEASE OF THE SHIPS TRAPPED IN THE CANAL. HE HAD RAISED THIS QUESTION WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND UNDERSTOOD THE DIFFICULTIES, BUT HE HOPED

THAT NEVERTHELESS NO OPPORTUNITY WOULD BE NEGLECTED WHICH MIGHT ALLOW FOR THESE SHIPS TO LEAVE. THE SECOND QUESTION CONCERNED COMPENSATION OWING TO BRITISH SUBJECTS IN RESPECT OF THE SEQUESTRATION LAWS OF 1956 AND THE NATIONALISATION LAWS OF 1961.

(12)

HERE, IT SEEMED, MANY OF THE DIFFICULTIES WERE LARGELY OF AN INTERNAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER AND COULD, GIVEN AN IMPULSION FROM ABOVE, BE SWIFTLY SOLVED. THERE WERE, FOR INSTANCE, ONLY 49 INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED IN THE 120 CASES OF PROPERTY NATIONALISATION. HERE ONCE AGAIN IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO SORT OUT THE TAX AND OTHER DIFFICULTIES AND LIQUIDATE THE PROBLEM BY THE END OF THE YEAR. HE HOPED THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD FEEL ABLE TO HAVE A WORD WITH MR AMIN HUWAIDI, MINISTER OF STATE WITHOUT PORTFOLIO LIKE HIMSELF, WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF THIS MATTER.

THE PRESIDENT

---------- SAID THAT HE WOULD BE GLAD TO DO SO AND HOPED THAT THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR WOULD SPEAK TO MR HUWAIDI ABOUT IT ALSO.

MR THOMSON

---------- THANKED HIM AND SAID THAT WITH THE ELIMINATION OF THIS PROBLEM A PERSISTENT, IF MINOR, IRRITANT IN ANGLO/UAR RELATIONS WOULD BE REMOVED, PARTICULARLY IN THE PARLIAMENTARY SPHERE.

14. FINALLY, AS MR THOMSON WAS LEAVING,

PRESIDENT

NASSER

---------- SAID THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW UAR FIVE-YEAR PLAN, THE UAR WOULD BE GLAD TO DO MORE TRADE WITH BRITAIN. HE MADE NOSECRET OF THE FACT THAT THIS TRADE WOULD HAVE TO BE ON A CREDIT BASIS AS THE UAR WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO PAY IMMEDIATELY, BUT HE POINTED OUT THAT CREDIT WOULD NOT BE FOR CONSUMER GOODS SINCE NO CONSUMER GOODS WERE IMPORTED INTO THE UAR BUT WOULD BE FOR CAPITAL GOODS AND MACHINERY TO DEVELOP UAR INDUSTRY.
THIS MEANT THAT THE CREDITS WOULD BE PROPERLY USED.

MR THOMSON

---------- SAID THAT WITH THE RE-SCHEDULING AGREEMENT ON DEBTS RECENTLY SIGNED BETWEEN THE UAR AND BRITAIN A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF MEDIUM-TERM CREDIT WAS BECOMING AVAILABLE. HE WOULD HOWEVER BRING PRESIDENT NASSER'S REQUEST TO THE ATTENTION OF HIS COLLEAGUES.

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S.R.R. BEAUMONT +

Office of the Minister without Portfolio.
September 1964.

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CONFIDENTIAL

Record of conversation between
The Rt. Hon. George Thomson, MP., Minister without Portfolio
and President Gamal Abdul Nasser at Manchiet El Bakhri
on 3rd SEPTEMBER, 1969

PRESENT:

The Rt. Hon. George Thomson, MP,	President Nasser
Sir Richard Beaumont	Mr. Mahmud Riad

MR. THOMSON expressed his thanks to the President for the invitation to visit the UAR and his enjoyment at the way the visit had been carried out. He said that his visit to Aswan followed by a train journey to Luxor in the early morning had given him a very good picture of ancient and modern Egypt. He supposed that the electricity being generated from the High Dam was already being used widely in Egypt. PRESIDENT NASSER said that the High Dam in fact had created more electricity than the UAR Government at present used but that agreement had been reached with the USSR for an aluminium and phospherus plant and other factories which could absorb spare electrical capacity. He said that it was intended to build a series of smaller barrages further down the Nile which would give yet more electrical power. In reply to a question from Mr. Thomson President Nasser said that the village electrification scheme which had been going slow since 1965 was now being started up again and that it was hoped that a further one hundred villages would be receiving electricity in the course of the year. Mr. Thomson remarked that the advent of electricity changed the whole aspect of village life and President Nasser agreed. He said that it was hoped that the bringing of electricity to the villages would have some impact on the birthrate and that in addition to electricity he would be very much in favour of introducing cheap television, which would change the habits of the peasants from their present way of life, which consisted of coming in from the fields, eating at sundown, and then going to bed and procreating children.
Mr. Thomson remarked that he noticed that in the local offices of the Arab Socialist Union there were facilities for watching

television and if sets were expensive surely they could be made available in cafes and other meeting places. The President agreed. He said that he also hoped that the Minister of Culture would be able to set up 'palaces of culture' which, despite the rather pompous-sounding name, would in fact be places where people could gather to watch television or a mobile cinema show, or make use of a small library. Mr. Themsen agreed that the change of social habits might well have an important effect on the population problem, which the President said was increasing at the rate of a million a year. President Nasser then went on to say that the UAR had for the first time in thirty years a credit balance in its foreign trade and that this was the result of growing industrialisation. There were quite a variety of experts now being sent abroad tyres, refrigerators, and various other things - all of which meant that some of the state manufacturing industries would be auto-financing in so far as their foreign exchange requirements were concerned.

2. Mr. Themsen remarked that in connection with our bilateral relations there was a gratifying strengthening of cultural ties and that there seemed to be few problems.

3. President Nasser then asked Mr. Themsen if he had been to the UAR before and Mr. Themsen said that he had, but it fell at an unfortunate moment. President Nasser then said that he had asked this question because he remembered the occasion, but had also read in the newspapers that on the present occasion Mr. Themsen had come to discuss commerce and culture but not political affairs, and he wondered whether this was really so. Mr. Themsen said that it most emphatically was not. He was very anxious to discuss political affairs.

4. President Nasser then said that the policy of the UAR Government continued to be based on a political solution of the Arab-Israel problem, and that for such a solution there were two essential elements. The first of these was that the Israelis should evacuate all the territory they had taken by force in 1967. This was the

meaning of resolution 242 and there could be no question of accepting the Israeli interpretation that the differences between the words 'withdrawal from territories' and 'withdrawal from the territories' meant that Israel was entitled to maintain itself in occupation of any of the territories taken from the Arabs in 1952. Indeed, President Nasser said, if the Israelis were to offer to evacuate the whole of Sinai provided that the UAR would agree to them remaining in sole possession of Jerusalem, he would never consent. He would rather put up with an Israeli occupation of Sinai for a further ten years if necessary. The second question was the question of the Palestinians and their rights according to the various United Nations Resolutions. On both these questions the American attitude had been very disappointing. They had in effect taken up the Israeli standpoint, and indeed their memoranda of 13 and 14 points contained phrases lifted from Mr. Eban's declarations. They had in fact started at a position more favourable to Israel and less favourable to the Arabs than that contained in Resolution 242. President Nasser said that the total commitment of the Americans to the Israeli cause was demonstrated by the decision to supply Phantoms before there was any sign of Israeli willingness to comply with Resolution 242. He went on to say that he himself was going to the Soviet Union shortly and he would certainly be asking the Russians to provide him with their answer to the Phanton, which the UAR did not possess. He said that escalation of this kind, resulting from United States policy, was absurd. Nevertheless, President Nasser continued, the UAR still hoped for a political settlement. He had been severely criticised for this, even by the Heads of State meeting in Cairo at the present and earlier by the congress of the Arab Socialist Union, who appeared to think that 'an indignity' was involved. He himself did not look at it in this light. He saw that the UAR was in the front line and that although in any hostilities severe losses in men and material would undoubtedly be inflicted on the Israelis, military and civilian, the UAR and its sons and daughters would equally suffer. Widescale hostilities would set back the economic development of the country. Therefore, although making military preparations, it was logical to hope that they would not be necessary.

5. Mr. Thomson said that there appeared to have grown up an impression that British policy on Resolution 242 had likewise changed in a sense less favourable to the Arabs since November, 1967. He could tell President Nasser with authority that this was, in fact, not so. The basis of the British position remained the same. It was that the British Government did not consider that Israel was entitled to remain in possession of territory acquired by war. This was the first and overriding provision. The second provision was that the boundaries between the countries must be secure and recognised. This meant that any changes to the frontiers before the June war must be fixed by agreement between both the parties. President Nasser here interjected that while he insisted on the principle of no acquisition of territory as a result of war this did not mean that rectification of boundaries, such as the rennification of villages with their land or their water supplies was not acceptable as a part of a process of rationalisation final boundaries. Mr. Thomson continued that the question of secure boundaries entailed the recognition of the existence of a Jewish state. He said that he had met Palestinians in Beirut who felt that the Jewish state should not exist: only a Palestinian state comprising Arab and Jewish sections. This he considered unrealistic at the outset, though it might come about later. President Nasser signified his agreement. Mr. Thomson then continued that in relation to security, Her Majesty's Government were of the opinion that a United Nations presence on a more or less permanent basis at Sharm El Sheikh was a necessity. President Nasser did not disagree. Next, Mr. Thomson said that Her Majesty's Government agreed that a solution to the refugee problem in accordance with United Nations resolutions was a vital part of the settlement and, finally, that the whole settlement as outlined in Resolution 242 was a package.

6. President Nasser said that he agreed with all this but that in point of fact if there was an end to belligerency on the basis of Israeli withdrawal and a settlement of the problem of the Palestinian people, most of the other provisions were irrelevant. For instance, if the Israelis withdrew and the state of belligerency came to an end there would, in fact, be no need for any garrison in Sharm El Sheikh. Its presence there would be irrelevant but if

belligerency did not come to an end a United Nations or any other garrison at Sharm El Shaikh would not guarantee Israel access to Eilath because it was perfectly possible for the UAR operating from Port Said, Saudi Arabia and South Yemen to prevent the access of Israeli shipping to the Red Sea at the south end. Likewise if belligerency came to an end many of the other difficulties which Israel counted today would be resolved. Israel would be part of the Middle East scene and it was perfectly conceivable that in a year or two the UAR would be in diplomatic relations with Israel, which would after all contain a large Arab population, and Israel might be interested in the Jewish population in the UAR. Mr. Themsen said that this was so but that the lack of confidence bred of twenty years of hostility was such that both sides would feel in need of guarantees, and the putting into practice of these guarantees would call for sacrifices from both sides. Mr. Themsen added that of course the Palestine guerilla movement was a new factor in the situation.

8. President Nasser said that it certainly was and that although it was quite certain that the Palestine guerillas could never liberate the occupied territories and force Israeli withdrawal and indeed would never be more than a nuisance to Israel, one should not ignore the fact that there was a very strong psychological feeling among Palestinians impelling them to make sacrifices for the Palestinian cause beyond anything that had hitherto been seen. He himself knew of young Palestinians at the University in Cairo who had given up their courses in order to participate in the resistance. The resistance thus was a psychological factor which must be seriously taken into consideration and the Palestine refugee problem must be dealt with accordingly. Mr. Themsen said that such actions as that taken by the PFLP in hi-jacking an American plane might be spectacular but they were acts of piracy and would alienate world opinion. President Nasser agreed; he said the PFLP had a purpose in taking the plane to Damascus, namely, to embarrass the Syrian Government. The Syrian Government did not recognise the PFLP and its leader, Georges Habbash, had been imprisoned in Syria and had escaped. He therefore had a personal grudge against the Syrian regime and was trying to show it was not doing enough to help the Palestine cause.

9. Mr. Thomsen asked President Nasser what was his news from Libya. President Nasser said that the revolution in Libya had come as a complete surprise. It had always been assumed in Cairo that a revolution would take place there but that it had equally been assumed that it would not be until after the death of King Idris. He said that he had had no idea who the leaders of the Revolution were and had been making enquiries. It now turned out that they were Arab nationalists and neither Communists nor Ba'athists. The principle leader who he believed was Bou Shawraib or some such name had, he also discovered, been trained in the military academy in Cairo. It appeared that they had been entirely successful in their Revolution. He added that he said this not on the basis of the statements put out by the revolutionary leaders themselves but on the basis of intensive radio monitoring which the UAR security services had put into effect directly the Revolution became known, as a result of which they had been able to pick up police and army messages from the different parts of Libya and make an hourly assessment of the way in which the Revolution was being consolidated. It was clear from these that there had been very little resistance indeed. The only place where there might have been some was Fezzan and that had been swiftly overcome. For this reason the UAR had decided to recognise the new regime. President Nasser went on to remark that in view of the nature of the leaders of the Revolution and the ease with which they appeared to have accomplished their aim, any outside intervention in Libya, from whatever quarter, would seem likely to make matters worse rather than better. Mr. ~~MAHMUD RIAD~~ Mahmud Riad interpelated that even the Crown Prince had expressed his support for the movement and President Nasser said that when visiting the revolutionary headquarters the UAR Ambassador had seen the various Ministers and ex-Ministers, who said that they had decided to support the new regime. President Nasser said that one of the significant traits of the Libyan Revolution was that during the demonstrations on the second and third days some members of the crowd had been heard to call out quite clearly 'long live the Palestine resistance'. It was evident that the question of Palestine was one which affected youth throughout the Arab world and on which there were no soft-liners.

10. President Nasser then read from a telegram which he had been handed in the course of the conversation which was on the same lines as the broadcast reported in Benghazi tel. no. 237 to the effect that the revolutionary officers considered that Shalhi in going to London on behalf of the King was acting in a treacherous manner and that they were surprised at the British Government receiving him. The announcement went on to say that Shalhi had been stripped of all his offices and that if Her Majesty's Government continued to see him they bore full responsibility for so doing. Mr. Thomson said that in the circumstances it was inconceivable that Her Majesty's Government should not receive Mr. Shalhi if he went to London as the Emissary of King Idris and, after some thought, President Nasser said that equally if King Idris had sent an Emissary to him he would feel bound to receive him. He said that doubtless the UAR Ambassador in Tripoli had sent the telegram in the knowledge that Mr. Thomson was in Cairo and that he hoped that Mr. Thomson would inform Her Majesty's Government. Mr. Thomson said he would, and after some discussion it was agreed that the UAR Ministry of Foreign Affairs would send a telegram informing their Ambassador that Mr. Thomson had been told of these representations and instructing him to urge the revolutionary officers not to be too sensitive on this subject.

11. President Nasser said that he hoped that, given the success of the Revolution, Her Majesty's Government would do something to allay the misgivings of the revolutionary officers. He said that as a former revolutionary himself he fully understood the feelings of anxiety and nervousness, combined probably with acute sleeplessness. He felt sure that relations between Britain and Libya should continue. The new regime in Libya would still need to sell its oil to the West and unlike the UAR, which was generating a certain amount of capital, Libya would require Western capital for a further oil investment. Indeed, he said, even in the UAR in the field of oil the UAR Government had made an exception and encouraged American capital (Phillips and Pan American) to participate in oil prospection. Mr. Thomson asked whether any member of the Libyan Revolutionary Council was likely to try to join in the four power talks.

12. President Nasser laughed and said it was unlikely. Speaking from experience, he would say that at any moment they were much too terrified to leave their offices let alone the country. Mr. Thomson asked the President what had been agreed at the 'Little Summit' with the Syrians, Jordanians and Iraqis. The President referred to Mr. Mahmud Riad, who, he said, had been responsible for the communique. Mr. Riad muttered something to the effect that the communique would say that they had reached total agreement, to which the President added with a laugh that, needless to say, what the communique said did not in fact represent in any way what had been agreed.

13. Mr. Thomson reverting to the question of bilateral relations said that there were two points which he felt he should raise in that they covered the views of the British public and Parliament on the UAR. The one was the need for the release of the ships trapped in the Canal. He had raised this question with the Foreign Minister and understood the difficulties, but he hoped that nevertheless no opportunity would be neglected which might allow for these ships to leave. The second question concerned compensation owing to British subjects in respect of the sequestration laws of 1956 and the nationalisation laws of 1961. Here, it seemed, many of the difficulties were largely of an internal administrative order and could, given an impulsion from above, be swiftly solved. There were, for instance, only 49 individuals concerned in the 120 cases of property nationalisation. Here once again it should be possible to sort out the tax and other difficulties and liquidate the problem by the end of the year. He hoped that the President would feel able to have a word with Mr. Amin Huweidi, Minister of State without Portfolio like himself, who was in charge of this matter. The President said that he would be glad to do so and hoped that the British Ambassador would speak to Mr. Huweidi about it also. Mr. Thomson thanked him and said that with the elimination of this problem a persistent, if minor, irritant in Anglo/UAR relations would be removed, particularly in the Parliamentary sphere.

14. Finally, as Mr. Thomson was leaving, President Nasser said that in the context of the new UAR five-year plan, the UAR would be glad to do more trade with Britain. He made no secret of the fact that this trade would have to be on a credit basis as the UAR was not in a position to pay immediately, but he pointed out that credit would not be for consumer goods since no consumer goods were imported into the UAR but would be for capital goods and machinery to develop UAR industry. This meant that the credits would be properly used. Mr. Thomson said that with the re-scheduling agreement on debts recently signed between the UAR and Britain a certain amount of medium-term credit was becoming available. He would however, bring President Nasser's request to the attention of his colleagues.

Office of the Minister without Portfolio

September 1969

RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN
THE RT. HON. GEORGE THOMSON, MP., MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO
AND PRESIDENT GAMAL ABDUL NASSER AT HANCHIET EL BAKRI
ON 3rd SEPTEMBER 1969

PRESENT:

The Rt. Hon. George Thomson, MP, — President Nasser
Sir Richard Beaumont — Mr. Mahmud Riad

Mr. Thomson expressed his thanks to the President for the invitation to visit the UAR and his enjoyment at the way the visit had been carried out. He said that his visit to Aswan followed by a train journey to Luxor in the early morning had given him a very good picture of ancient and modern Egypt. He supposed that the electricity being generated from the High Dam was already being used widely in Egypt. President Nasser said that the High Dam in fact had created more electricity than the UAR Government at present used but that agreement had been reached with the USSR for an aluminium and phosphorus plant and other factories which could absorb spare electrical capacity. He said that it was intended to build a series of smaller barrages further down the Nile which would give yet more electrical power. In reply to a question from Mr. Thomson, President Nasser said that the village electrification scheme which had been going slow since 1965 was now being started up again and that it was hoped that a further one hundred villages would be receiving electricity in the course of the year. Mr. Thomson remarked that the advent of electricity changed the whole aspect of village life and President Nasser agreed. He said that it was hoped that the bringing of electricity to the villages would have some impact on the birthrate and that in addition to electricity he would be very much in favour of introducing cheap television, which would change the habits of the peasants from their present way of life, which consisted of coming in from the fields, eating at sundown, and then going to bed and procreating children.
Mr. Thomson remarked that he noticed that in the local offices of the Arab Socialist Union there were facilities for watching

television and if sets were expensive surely they could be made available in cafes and other meeting places. The President agreed. He said that he also hoped that the Minister of Culture would be able to set up 'palaces of culture' which, despite the rather pompous-sounding name, would in fact be places where people could gather to watch television or a mobile cinema show, or make use of a small library. Mr. Thomson agreed that the change of social habits might well have an important effect on the population problem, which the President said was increasing at the rate of a million a year. President Nasser then went on to say that the UAR had for the first time in thirty years a credit balance in its foreign trade and that this was the result of growing industrialisation. There were quite a variety of exports now being sent abroad tyres, refrigerators, and various other things - all of which meant that some of the state manufacturing industries would be auto-financing in so far as their foreign exchange requirements were concerned.

2. Mr. Thomson remarked that in connection with our bilateral relations there was a gratifying strengthening of cultural ties and that there seemed to be few problems.

3. President Nasser then asked Mr. Thomson if he had been to the UAR before and Mr. Thomson said that he had, but it fell at an unfortunate moment. President Nasser then said that he had asked this question because he remembered the occasion, but had also read in the newspapers that on the present occasion Mr. Thomson had come to discuss commerce and culture but not political affairs, and he wondered whether this was really so. Mr. Thomson said that it most emphatically was not. He was very anxious to discuss political affairs.

4. President Nasser then said that the policy of the UAR Government continued to be based on a political solution of the Arab-Israel problem, and that for such a solution there were two essential elements. The first of these was that the Israelis should evacuate all the territory they had taken by force in 1967. This was the

meaning of resolution 242 and there could be no question of accepting the Israeli interpretation that the differences between the words 'withdrawal from territories' and 'withdrawal from the territories' meant that Israel was entitled to maintain itself in occupation of any of the territories taken from the Arabs in 1952. Indeed, President Nasser said, if the Israelis were to offer to evacuate the whole of Sinai provided that the UAR would agree to them remaining in sole possession of Jerusalem, he would never consent. He would rather put up with an Israeli occupation of Sinai for a further ten years if necessary. The second question was the question of the Palestinians and their rights according to the various United Nations Resolutions. On both these questions the American attitude had been very disappointing. They had in effect taken up the Israeli standpoint, and indeed their memoranda of 13 and 14 points contained phrases lifted from Mr. Eban's declarations. They had in fact started at a position more favourable to Israel and less favourable to the Arabs then that contained in Resolution 242. President Nasser said that the total commitment of the Americans to the Israeli cause was demonstrated by the decision to supply Phantoms before there was any sign of Israeli willingness to comply with Resolution 242. He went on to say that he himself was going to the Soviet Union shortly and he would certainly be asking the Russians to provide him with their answer to the Phanton, which the UAR did not possess. He said that escalation of this kind, resulting from United States policy, was absurd. Nevertheless, President Nasser continued, the UAR still hoped for a political settlement. He had been severely criticised for this, even by the Heads of State meeting in Cairo at the present and earlier by the congress of the Arab Socialist Union, who appeared to think that 'an indignity' was involved. He himself did not look at it in this light. He saw that the UAR was in the front line and that although in any hostilities severe losses in men and material would undoubtedly be inflicted on the Israelis, military and civilian, the UAR and its sons and daughters would equally suffer. Widescale hostilities would set back the economic development of the country. Therefore, although making military preparations, it was logical to hope that they would not be necessary.

5. Mr. Thomson said that there appeared to have grown up an impression that British policy on Resolution 242 had likewise changed in a sense less favourable to the Arabs since November, 1967. He could tell President Nasser with authority that this was, in fact, not so. The basis of the British position remained the same. It was that the British Government did not consider that Israel was entitled to remain in possession of territory acquired by war. This was the first and overriding provision. The second provision was that the boundaries between the countries must be secure and recognised. This meant that any changes to the frontiers before the June war must be fixed by agreement between both the parties. President Nasser here interjected that while he insisted on the principle of no acquisition of territory as a result of war this did not mean that rectification of boundaries, such as the reunification of villages with their land or their water supplies was not acceptable as a part of a process of rationalisation final boundaries. Mr. Thomson continued that the question of secure boundaries entailed the recognition of the existence of a Jewish state. He said that he had met Palestinians in Beirut who felt that the Jewish state should not exist: only a Palestinian state comprising Arab and Jewish sections. This he considered unrealistic at the outset, though it might come about later. President Nasser signified his agreement. Mr. Thomson then continued that in relation to security, Her Majesty's Government were of the opinion that a United Nations presence on a more or less permanent basis at Sharm El Shaikh was a necessity. President Nasser did not disagree. Next, Mr. Thomson said that Her Majesty's Government agreed that a solution to the refugee problem in accordance with United Nations resolutions was a vital part of the settlement and, finally, that the whole settlement as outlined in Resolution 242 was a package.

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belligerency did not come to an end a United Nations or any other garrison at Sharm El Shaikh would not guarantee Israel access to Eilath because it was perfectly possible for the UAR operating from Port Said, Saudi Arabia and South Yemen to prevent the access of Israeli shipping to the Red Sea at the south end. Likewise if belligerency came to an end many of the other difficulties which Israel counted today would be resolved. Israel would be part of the Middle East scene and it was perfectly conceivable that in a year or two the UAR would be in diplomatic relations with Israel, which would after all contain a large Arab population, and Israel might be interested in the Jewish population in the UAR. Mr. Thomson said that this was so but that the lack of confidence bred of twenty years of hostility was such that both sides would feel in need of guarantees, and the putting into practice of these guarantees would call for sacrifices from both sides. Mr. Thomson added that of course the Palestine guerilla movement was a new factor in the situation.

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9. Mr. Thomson asked President Nasser what was his news from Libya. President Nasser said that the revolution in Libya had come as a complete surprise. It had always been assumed in Cairo that a revolution would take place there but that it had equally been assumed that it would not be until after the death of King Idris. He said that he had had no idea who the leaders of the Revolution were and had been making enquiries. It now turned out that they were Arab nationalists and neither Communists nor Ba'athists. The principle leader who he believed was Bou Shuwraib or some such name had, he also discovered, been trained in the military academy in Cairo. It appeared that they had been entirely successful in their Revolution. He added that he said this not on the basis of the statements put out by the revolutionary leaders themselves but on the basis of intensive radio monitoring which the UAR security services had put into effect directly the Revolution became known, as a result of which they had been able to pick up police and army messages from the different parts of Libya and make an hourly assessment of the way in which the Revolution was being consolidated. It was clear from these that there had been very little resistance indeed. The only place where there might have been some was Fezzan and that had been swiftly overcome. For this reason the UAR had decided to recognise the new regime. President Nasser went on to remark that in view of the nature of the leaders of the Revolution and the ease with which they appeared to have accomplished their aim, any outside intervention in Libya, from whatever quarter, would seem likely to make matters worse rather than better. Mr. Mahmud Riad interpolated that even the Crown Prince had expressed his support for the movement and President Nasser said that when visiting the revolutionary headquarters the UAR Ambassador had seen the various Ministers and ex-Ministers, who said that they had decided to support the new regime. President Nasser said that one of the significant traits of the Libyan Revolution was that during the demonstrations on the second and third days some members of the crowd had been heard to call out quite clearly 'long live the Palestine resistance'. It was evident that the question of Palestine was one which affected youth throughout the Arab world and on which there were no soft-liners.

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11. President Nasser said that he hoped that, given the success of the Revolution, Her Majesty's Government would do something to allay the misgivings of the revolutionary officers. He said that as a former revolutionary himself he fully understood the feelings of anxiety and nervousness, combined probably with acute sleeplessness. He felt sure that relations between Britain and Libya should continue. The new regime in Libya would still need to sell its oil to the West and unlike the UAR, which was generating a certain amount of capital, Libya would require Western capital for a further oil investment. Indeed, he said, even in the UAR in the field of oil the UAR Government had made an exception and encouraged American capital (Phillips and Pan American) to participate in oil prospection. Mr. Thomson asked whether any member of the Libyan Revolutionary Council was likely to try to join in the Four Power Talks.

12. President Nasser laughed and said it was unlikely. Speaking from experience, he would say that at any moment they were much too terrified to leave their offices let alone the country. Mr. Thomson asked the President what had been agreed at the 'Little Summit' with the Syrians, Jordanians and Iraqis. The President referred to Mr. Mahmud Riad, who, he said, had been responsible for the communique. Mr. Riad muttered something to the effect that the communique would say that they had reached total agreement, to which the President added with a laugh that, needless to say, what the communique said did not in fact represent in any way what had been agreed.

13. Mr. Thomson reverting to the question of bilateral relations said that there were two points which he felt he should raise in that they covered the views of the British public and Parliament on the UAR. The one was the need for the release of the ships trapped in the Canal. He had raised this question with the Foreign Minister and understood the difficulties, but he hoped that nevertheless no opportunity would be neglected which might allow for these ships to leave. The second question concerned compensation owing to British subjects in respect of the sequestration laws of 1956 and the nationalisation laws of 1961. Here, it seemed, many of the difficulties were largely of an internal administrative order and could, given an impulsion from above, be swiftly solved. There were, for instance, only 49 individuals concerned in the 120 cases of property nationalisation. Here once again it should be possible to sort out the tax and other difficulties and liquidate the problem by the end of the year. He hoped that the President would feel able to have a word with Mr. Amin Huwaidi, Minister of State without Portfolio like himself, who was in charge of this matter. The President said that he would be glad to do so and hoped that the British Ambassador would speak to Mr. Huwaidi about it also. Mr. Thomson thanked him and said that with the elimination of this problem a persistent, if minor, irritant in Anglo/UAR relations would be removed, particularly in the Parliamentary sphere.

14. Finally, as Mr. Thomson was leaving, President Nasser said that in the context of the new UAR five-year plan, the UAR would be glad to do more trade with Britain. He made no secret of the fact that this trade would have to be on a credit basis as the UAR was not in a position to pay immediately, but he pointed out that credit would not be for consumer goods since no consumer goods were imported into the UAR but would be for capital goods and machinery to develop UAR industry. This meant that the credits would be properly used. Mr. Thomson said that with the re-scheduling agreement on debts recently signed between the UAR and Britain a certain amount of medium-term credit was becoming available. He would however, bring President Nasser's request to the attention of his colleagues.

Office of the Minister without Portfolio

16th September 1969

RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN
THE RT. HON. GEORGE THOMSON, MP., MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO
AND PRESIDENT GAMAL ABDUL NASSER AT HAICHTIET EL BAKHRI
ON 3rd SEPTEMBER 1969

PRESENT:

The Rt. Hon. George Thomson, MP, — President Nasser
Sir Richard Beaumont — Mr. Mahmud Riad

Mr. Thomson expressed his thanks to the President for the invitation to visit the UAR and his enjoyment at the way the visit had been carried out. He said that his visit to Aswan followed by a train journey to Luxor in the early morning had given him a very good picture of ancient and modern Egypt. He supposed that the electricity being generated from the High Dam was already being used widely in Egypt. President Nasser said that the High Dam in fact had created more electricity than the UAR Government at present used but that agreement had been reached with the USSR for an aluminium and phosphorus plant and other factories which could absorb spare electrical capacity. He said that it was intended to build a series of smaller barrages further down the Nile which would give yet more electrical power. In reply to a question from Mr. Thomson, President Nasser said that the village electrification scheme which had been going slow since 1965 was now being started up again and that it was hoped that a further one hundred villages would be receiving electricity in the course of the year. Mr. Thomson remarked that the advent of electricity changed the whole aspect of village life and President Nasser agreed. He said that it was hoped that the bringing of electricity to the villages would have some impact on the birthrate and that in addition to electricity he would be very much in favour of introducing cheap television, which would change the habits of the peasants from their present way of life, which consisted of coming in from the fields, eating at sundown, and then going to bed and procreating children.
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television and if sets were expensive surely they could be made available in cafes and other meeting places. The President agreed. He said that he also hoped that the Minister of Culture would be able to set up 'palaces of culture' which, despite the rather pompous-sounding name, would in fact be places where people could gather to watch television or a mobile cinema show, or make use of a small library. Mr. Thomson agreed that the change of social habits might well have an important effect on the population problem, which the President said was increasing at the rate of a million a year. President Nasser then went on to say that the UAR had for the first time in thirty years a credit balance in its foreign trade and that this was the result of growing industrialisation. There were quite a variety of exports now being sent abroad tyres, refrigerators, and various other things - all of which meant that some of the state manufacturing industries would be auto-financing in so far as their foreign exchange requirements were concerned.

2. Mr. Thomson remarked that in connection with our bilateral relations there was a gratifying strengthening of cultural ties and that there seemed to be few problems.

3. President Nasser then asked Mr. Thomson if he had been to the UAR before and Mr. Thomson said that he had, but it fell at an unfortunate moment. President Nasser then said that he had asked this question because he remembered the occasion, but had also read in the newspapers that on the present occasion Mr. Thomson had come to discuss commerce and culture but not political affairs, and he wondered whether this was really so. Mr. Thomson said that it most emphatically was not. He was very anxious to discuss political affairs.

4. President Nasser then said that the policy of the UAR Government continued to be based on a political solution of the Arab-Israel problem, and that for such a solution there were two essential elements. The first of these was that the Israelis should evacuate all the territory they had taken by force in 1967. This was the

meaning of resolution 242 and there could be no question of accepting the Israeli interpretation that the differences between the words 'withdrawal from territories' and 'withdrawal from the territories' meant that Israel was entitled to maintain itself in occupation of any of the territories taken from the Arabs in 1952. Indeed, President Nasser said, if the Israelis were to offer to evacuate the whole of Sinai provided that the UAR would agree to them remaining in sole possession of Jerusalem, he would never consent. He would rather put up with an Israeli occupation of Sinai for a further ten years if necessary. The second question was the question of the Palestinians and their rights according to the various United Nations Resolutions. On both these questions the American attitude had been very disappointing. They had in effect taken up the Israeli standpoint, and indeed their memoranda of 13 and 14 points contained phrases lifted from Mr. Eban's declarations. They had in fact started at a position more favourable to Israel and less favourable to the Arabs then that contained in Resolution 242. President Nasser said that the total commitment of the Americans to the Israeli cause was demonstrated by the decision to supply Phantoms before there was any sign of Israeli willingness to comply with Resolution 242. He went on to say that he himself was going to the Soviet Union shortly and he would certainly be asking the Russians to provide him with their answer to the Phanton, which the UAR did not possess. He said that escalation of this kind, resulting from United States policy, was absurd. Nevertheless, President Nasser continued, the UAR still hoped for a political settlement. He had been severely criticised for this, even by the Heads of State meeting in Cairo at the present and earlier by the congress of the Arab Socialist Union, who appeared to think that 'an indignity' was involved. He himself did not look at it in this light. He saw that the UAR was in the front line and that although in any hostilities severe losses in men and material would undoubtedly be inflicted on the Israelis, military and civilian, the UAR and its sons and daughters would equally suffer. Widescale hostilities would set back the economic development of the country. Therefore, although making military preparations, it was logical to hope that they would not be necessary.

5. Mr. Thomson said that there appeared to have grown up an impression that British policy on Resolution 242 had likewise changed in a sense less favourable to the Arabs since November, 1967. He could tell President Nasser with authority that this was, in fact, not so. The basis of the British position remained the same. It was that the British Government did not consider that Israel was entitled to remain in possession of territory acquired by war. This was the first and overriding provision. The second provision was that the boundaries between the countries must be secure and recognised. This meant that any changes to the frontiers before the June war must be fixed by agreement between both the parties. President Nasser here interjected that while he insisted on the principle of no acquisition of territory as a result of war this did not mean that rectification of boundaries, such as the reunification of villages with their land or their water supplies was not acceptable as a part of a process of rationalisation final boundaries. Mr. Thomson continued that the question of secure boundaries entailed the recognition of the existence of a Jewish state. He said that he had met Palestinians in Beirut who felt that the Jewish state should not exist: only a Palestinian state comprising Arab and Jewish sections. This he considered unrealistic at the outset, though it might come about later. President Nasser signified his agreement. Mr. Thomson then continued that in relation to security, Her Majesty's Government were of the opinion that a United Nations presence on a more or less permanent basis at Sharm El Shaikh was a necessity. President Nasser did not disagree. Next, Mr. Thomson said that Her Majesty's Government agreed that a solution to the refugee problem in accordance with United Nations resolutions was a vital part of the settlement and, finally, that the whole settlement as outlined in Resolution 242 was a package.

6. President Nasser said that he agreed with all this but that in point of fact if there was an end to belligerency on the basis of Israeli withdrawal and a settlement of the problem of the Palestinian people, most of the other provisions were irrelevant. For instance, if the Israelis withdrew and the state of belligerency came to an end there would, in fact, be no need for any garrison in Sharm El Shaikh. Its presence there would be irrelevant but if

belligerency did not come to an end a United Nations or any other garrison at Sharm El Shaikh would not guarantee Israel access to Eilath because it was perfectly possible for the UAR operating from Port Said, Saudi Arabia and South Yemen to prevent the access of Israeli shipping to the Red Sea at the south end. Likewise if belligerency came to an end many of the other difficulties which Israel counted today would be resolved. Israel would be part of the Middle East scene and it was perfectly conceivable that in a year or two the UAR would be in diplomatic relations with Israel, which would after all contain a large Arab population, and Israel might be interested in the Jewish population in the UAR. Mr. Thomson said that this was so but that the lack of confidence bred of twenty years of hostility was such that both sides would feel in need of guarantees, and the putting into practice of these guarantees would call for sacrifices from both sides. Mr. Thomson added that of course the Palestine guerilla movement was a new factor in the situation.

8. President Nasser said that it certainly was and that although it was quite certain that the Palestine guerillas could never liberate the occupied territories and force Israeli withdrawal and indeed would never be more than a nuisance to Israel, one should not ignore the fact that there was a very strong psychological feeling among Palestinians impelling them to make sacrifices for the Palestinian cause beyond anything that had hitherto been seen. He himself knew of young Palestinians at the University in Cairo who had given up their courses in order to participate in the resistance. The resistance thus was a psychological factor which must be seriously taken into consideration and the Palestine refugee problem must be dealt with accordingly. Mr. Thomson said that such actions as that taken by the PFLP in hi-jacking an American plane might be spectacular but they were acts of piracy and would alienate world opinion. President Nasser agreed; he said the PFLP had a purpose in taking the plane to Damascus, nanely, to embarrass the Syrian Government. The Syrian Government did not recognise the PFLP and its leader, Georges Habbash, had been imprisoned in Syria and had escaped. He therefore had a personal grudge against the Syrian regime and was trying to show it was not doing enough to help the Palestine cause.

9. Mr. Thomson asked President Nasser what was his news from Libya. President Nasser said that the revolution in Libya had come as a complete surprise. It had always been assumed in Cairo that a revolution would take place there but that it had equally been assumed that it would not be until after the death of King Idris. He said that he had had no idea who the leaders of the Revolution were and had been making enquiries. It now turned out that they were Arab nationalists and neither Communists nor Ba'athists. The principle leader who he believed was Bou Shuwraib or some such name had, he also discovered, been trained in the military academy in Cairo. It appeared that they had been entirely successful in their Revolution. He added that he said this not on the basis of the statements put out by the revolutionary leaders themselves but on the basis of intensive radio monitoring which the UAR security services had put into effect directly the Revolution became known, as a result of which they had been able to pick up police and army messages from the different parts of Libya and make an hourly assessment of the way in which the Revolution was being consolidated. It was clear from these that there had been very little resistance indeed. The only place where there might have been some was Fezzan and that had been swiftly overcome. For this reason the UAR had decided to recognise the new regime. President Nasser went on to remark that in view of the nature of the leaders of the Revolution and the ease with which they appeared to have accomplished their aim, any outside intervention in Libya, from whatever quarter, would seem likely to make matters worse rather than better. Mr. Mahmud Riad interpolated that even the Crown Prince had expressed his support for the movement and President Nasser said that when visiting the revolutionary headquarters the UAR Ambassador had seen the various Ministers and ex-Ministers, who said that they had decided to support the new regime. President Nasser said that one of the significant traits of the Libyan Revolution was that during the demonstrations on the second and third days some members of the crowd had been heard to call out quite clearly 'long live the Palestine resistance'. It was evident that the question of Palestine was one which affected youth throughout the Arab world and on which there were no soft-liners.

10. President Nasser then read from a telegram which he had been handed in the course of the conversation which was on the same lines as the broadcast reported in Benghazi tel. no. 237 to the effect that the revolutionary officers considered that Shalhi in going to London on behalf of the King was acting in a treacherous manner and that they were surprised at the British Government receiving him. The announcement went on to say that Shalhi had been stripped of all his offices and that if Her Majesty's Government continued to see him they bore full responsibility for so doing. Mr. Thomson said that in the circumstances it was inconceivable that Her Majesty's Government should not receive Mr. Shalhi if he went to London as the Emissary of King Idris and, after some thought, President Nasser said that equally if King Idris had sent an Emissary to him he would feel bound to receive him. He said that doubtless the UAR Ambassador in Tripoli had sent the telegram in the knowledge that Mr. Thomson was in Cairo and that he hoped that Mr. Thomson would inform Her Majesty's Government. Mr. Thomson said he would, and after some discussion it was agreed that the UAR Ministry of Foreign Affairs would send a telegram informing their Ambassador that Mr. Thomson had been told of these representations and instructing him to urge the revolutionary officers not to be too sensitive on this subject.

11. President Nasser said that he hoped that, given the success of the Revolution, Her Majesty's Government would do something to allay the misgivings of the revolutionary officers. He said that as a former revolutionary himself he fully understood the feelings of anxiety and nervousness, combined probably with acute sleeplessness. He felt sure that relations between Britain and Libya should continue. The new regime in Libya would still need to sell its oil to the West and unlike the UAR, which was generating a certain amount of capital, Libya would require Western capital for a further oil investment. Indeed, he said, even in the UAR in the field of oil the UAR Government had made an exception and encouraged American capital (Phillips and Pan American) to participate in oil prospection. Mr. Thomson asked whether any member of the Libyan Revolutionary Council was likely to try to join in the Four Power Talks.

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Office of the Minister without Portfolio

16th September 1969

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The following pages have been filmed to the best possible production, owing to the extreme poor quality of the print.

16TH September 1969

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[redacted]

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Sir Richard Beaumont
President Nasser
Mr. Mahmud Riad

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meaning of resolution 242 and there could be no question of accepting the Israeli interpretation that the differences between the words 'withdrawal from territories' and 'withdrawal from the territories' meant that Israel was entitled to maintain itself in occupation of any of the territories taken from the Arabs in 1952. Indeed, President Nasser said, if the Israelis were to offer to evacuate the whole of Sinai provided that the UAR would agree to them remaining in sole possession of Jerusalem, he would never consent. He would rather put up with an Israeli occupation of Sinai for a further ten years if necessary. The second question was the question of the Palestinians and their rights according to the various United Nations Resolutions. On both these questions the American attitude had been very disappointing. They had in effect taken up the Israeli standpoint, and indeed their memoranda of 13 and 14 points contained phrases lifted from Mr. Eban's declarations. They had in fact started at a position more favourable to Israel and less favourable to the Arabs than that contained in Resolution 242. President Nasser said that the total commitment of the Americans to the Israeli cause was demonstrated by the decision to supply Phantoms before there was any sign of Israeli willingness to comply with Resolution 242. He went on to say that he himself was going to the Soviet Union shortly and he would certainly be asking the Russians to provide him with their answer to the Phantom, which the UAR did not possess. He said that escalation of this kind, resulting from United States policy, was absurd. Nevertheless, President Nasser continued, the UAR still hoped for a political settlement. He had been severely criticised for this, even by the Heads of State meeting in Cairo at the present and earlier by the congress of the Arab Socialist Union, who appeared to think that 'an indignity' was involved. He himself did not look at it in this light. He saw that the UAR was in the front line and that although in any hostilities severe losses in men and material would undoubtedly be inflicted on the Israelis, military and civilian, the UAR and its sons and daughters would equally suffer. Widescale hostilities would set back the economic development of the country. Therefore, although making military preparations, it was logical to hope that they would not be necessary.

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8. President Nasser said that it certainly was and that although it was quite certain that the Palestine guerillas could never liberate the occupied territories and force Israeli withdrawal and indeed would never be more than a nuisance to Israel, one should not ignore the fact that there was a very strong psychological feeling among Palestinians impelling them to make sacrifices for the Palestinian cause beyond anything that had hitherto been seen. He himself knew of young Palestinians at the University in Cairo who had given up their courses in order to participate in the resistance. The resistance thus was a psychological factor which must be seriously taken into consideration and the Palestine refugee problem must be dealt with accordingly. Mr. Thomson said that such actions as that taken by the PFLP in hi-jacking an American plane might be spectacular but they were acts of piracy and would alienate world opinion. President Nasser agreed; he said the PFLP had a purpose in taking the plane to Damascus, namely, to embarrass the Syrian Government. The Syrian Government did not recognise the PFLP and its leader, Georges Habbash, had been imprisoned in Syria and had escaped. He therefore had a personal grudge against the Syrian regime and was trying to show it was not doing enough to help the Palestine cause.

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9. Mr. Thomson asked President Nasser what was his news from Libya. President Nasser said that the revolution in Libya had come as a complete surprise. It had always been assumed in Cairo that a revolution would take place there but that it had equally been assumed that it would not be until after the death of King Idris. He said that he had had no idea who the leaders of the Revolution were and had been making enquiries. It now turned out that they were Arab nationalists and neither Communists nor Ba'athists. The principle leader who he believed was Bou Shmeraib or some such name had, he also discovered, been trained in the military academy in Cairo. It appeared that they had been entirely successful in their Revolution. He added that he said this not on the basis of the statements put out by the revolutionary leaders themselves but on the basis of intensive radio monitoring which the UAR security services had put into effect directly the Revolution became known, as a result of which they had been able to pick up police and army messages from the different parts of Libya and make an hourly assessment of the way in which the Revolution was being consolidated. It was clear from these that there had been very little resistance indeed. The only place where there might have been some was Fezzan and that had been swiftly overcome. For this reason the UAR had decided to recognise the new regime. President Nasser went on to remark that in view of the nature of the leaders of the Revolution and the ease with which they appeared to have accomplished their aim, any outside intervention in Libya, from whatever quarter, would seem likely to make matters worse rather than better. Mr. [redacted] interpolated that even the Crown Prince had expressed his support for the movement and President Nasser said that when visiting the revolutionary headquarters the UAR Ambassador had seen the various Ministers and ex-Ministers, who said that they had decided to support the new regime. President Nasser said that one of the significant trends of the Libyan Revolution was that during the demonstrations on the second and third days some members of the crowd had been heard to call out quite clearly 'Long live the Palestine resistance'. It was evident that the question of Palestine was one which affected youth throughout the Arab world and on which there were no soft-liners.

10. President Nasser then read from a telegram which he had been handed in the course of the conversation which was on the same lines as the broadcast reported in Benghazi tel. no. 237 to the effect that the revolutionary officers considered that Shalhi in going to London on behalf of the King was acting in a treacherous manner and that they were surprised at the British Government receiving him. The announcement went on to say that Shalhi had been stripped of all his offices and that if Her Majesty's Government persisted to see him they bore full responsibility for so doing. Mr. Thomson said that in the circumstances it was inconceivable that Her Majesty's Government should not receive Mr. Shalhi if he went to London as the Emissary of King Idris and, after some thought, President Nasser said that equally if King Idris had sent an Emissary to him he would feel bound to receive him. He said that nonetheless the UAR Ambassador in Tripoli had sent the telegram in the knowledge that Mr. Thomson was in Cairo and that he hoped that Mr. Thomson would inform Her Majesty's Government. Mr. Thomson said he would, and after some discussion it was agreed that the UAR Ministry of Foreign Affairs would send a telegram informing their Ambassador that Mr. Thomson had been told of these representations and instructing him to urge the revolutionary officers not to be too sensitive on this subject.

11. President Nasser said that he hoped that, given the success of the Revolution, Her Majesty's Government could do something to allay the misgivings of the revolutionary officers. He said that as a former revolutionary himself he fully understood the feelings of anxiety and nervousness, combined probably with acute sleeplessness. He felt sure that relations between Libya and Libya should continue. The new regime in Libya would still need to sell its oil to the West and while the UAR, which was generating a certain amount of capital, Libya would require Western capital for a further oil investment. Indeed, he said, even in the UAR in the fields of oil the UAR Government had made an exception and encouraged Western capital (British and Dutch companies) to participate in oil prospection. He thought about another important element in Libya development would likely be that to join in the Near Power Talks.

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12. President Nasser laughed and said it was unlikely. Speaking from experience, he would say that at any moment they were much too terrified to leave their offices let alone the country. Mr. Thomson asked the President what had been agreed at the 'Little Summit' with the Syrians, Jordanians and Iraqis. The President referred to Mr. Mahmud Riad, who, he said, had been responsible for the communique. Mr. Riad muttered something to the effect that the communique would say that they had reached total agreement, to which the President added with a laugh that, needless to say, what the communique said did not in fact represent in any way what had been agreed.

13. Mr. Thomson reverting to the question of bilateral relations said that there were two points which he felt he should raise in that they covered the views of the British public and Parliament on the UAR. The one was the need for the release of the ships trapped in the Canal. He had raised this question with the Foreign Minister and understood the difficulties, but he hoped that nevertheless no opportunity would be neglected which might allow for these ships to leave. The second question concerned compensation owing to British subjects in respect of the sequestration laws of 1956 and the nationalisation laws of 1961. Here, it seemed, many of the difficulties were largely of an internal administrative order and could, given an impulsion from above, be swiftly solved. There were, for instance, only 49 individuals concerned in the 120 cases of property nationalisation. Here once again it should be possible to sort out the tax and other difficulties and liquidate the problem by the end of the year. He hoped that the President would feel able to have a word with Mr. Amin Huweidi, Minister of State without Portfolio like himself, who was in charge of this matter. The President said that he would be glad to do so and hoped that the British Ambassador would speak to Mr. Huweidi about it also. Mr. Thomson thanked him and said that with the elimination of this problem a persistent, if minor, irritant in Anglo/UAR relations would be removed, particularly in the Parliamentary sphere.

14. Finally, as Mr. Thomson was leaving, President Nasser said that in the context of the new UAR five-year plan, the UAR would be glad to do more trade with Britain. He made no secret of the fact that this trade would have to be on a credit basis as the UAR was not in a position to pay immediately, but he pointed out that credit would not be for consumer goods since no consumer goods were imported into the UAR but would be for capital goods and machinery to develop UAR industry. This meant that the credits would be properly used. Mr. Thomson said that with the re-scheduling agreement on debts recently signed between the UAR and Britain a certain amount of medium-term credit was becoming available. He would however, bring President Nasser's request to the attention of his colleagues.

Office of the Minister without Portfolio

16th September 1969

RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN
THE RT. HON. GEORGE THOMSON, MP., MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO
AND PRESIDENT GAMAL ABDUL NASSER AT MANCHIET EL BAKRI
ON 3rd SEPTEMBER 1969

PRESENT:

The Rt. Hon. George Thomson, MP,	President Nasser
Sir Richard Beaumont	Mr. Mahmud Riad

Mr. Thomson expressed his thanks to the President for the invitation to visit the UAR and his enjoyment at the way the visit had been carried out. He said that his visit to Aswan followed by a train journey to Luxor in the early morning had given him a very good picture of ancient and modern Egypt. He supposed that the electricity being generated from the High Dam was already being used widely in Egypt. President Nasser said that the High Dam in fact had created more electricity than the UAR Government at present used but that agreement had been reached with the USSR for an aluminium and phosphorus plant and other factories which could absorb spare electrical capacity. He said that it was intended to build a series of smaller barrages further down the Nile which would give yet more electrical power. In reply to a question from Mr. Thomson, President Nasser said that the village electrification scheme which had been going slow since 1965 was now being started up again and that it was hoped that a further one hundred villages would be receiving electricity in the course of the year. Mr. Thomson remarked that the advent of electricity changed the whole aspect of village life and President Nasser agreed. He said that it was hoped that the bringing of electricity to the villages would have some impact on the birthrate and that in addition to electricity he would be very much in favour of introducing cheap television, which would change the habits of the peasants from their present way of life, which consisted of coming in from the fields, eating at sundown, and then going to bed and procreating children.
Mr. Thomson remarked that he noticed that in the local offices of the Arab Socialist Union there were facilities for watching

RECORD OF MEETING BETWEEN THE MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO AND DR. FAWZI (Special Assistant to President Nasser on Foreign Affairs) IN CAIRO AT 3.45 p.m. ON 3rd SEPTEMBER 1969

PRESENT:

The Rt. Hon. George Thomson, MP	Dr. Fawzi
Sir Richard Beaumont	Private Secretary
Mr. D. Hanson	

In welcoming Mr. Thomson Dr. Fawzi said he had had reports of the Minister's talks with the President and the Foreign Minister and was very happy with what he had heard.

2. Mr. Thomson said it was very agreeable to him personally to come back to Cairo after an interval of four years. He remembered vividly the talks he had had with Dr. Fawzi in 1965 and was very disappointed that circumstances had made it impossible for him to complete his programme. On this occasion he was particularly pleased to have had the opportunity of seeing something of the UAR outside Cairo, especially the Aswan High Dam and the archaeological sites at Luxor and Saqqara. He was very glad to find that Anglo-UAR bilateral relations were improving and hoped they would continue to do so. The arrival of the Royal Ballet and the British Soulpture exhibition for the millenary celebrations were particularly gratifying to him since he had initialled the Cultural Agreement in 1965.

3. Mr. Thomson went on to say that as regards the general political situation in the Middle East he had observed two main changes since his last visit. On the one hand, the friction between Britain and the UAR over Aden was now at an end and the policy Britain had adopted for the Gulf area seemed generally acceptable in the UAR. On the other hand there were distressing developments in the Arab-Israeli situation. The whole situation was far more menacing, and it seemed to him that, if disaster were to be avoided, a political settlement had to be found. The only hope of this was in the implementation of the 1967 United Nations resolution. He was very conscious of the fact that the resolution was

almost two years old, but Britain believed that the hopes of implementation were by no means exhausted. Britain had important interests in the Middle East and it was to her advantage to work for a political settlement. Having seen the High Dam and something of the Egyptian countryside he realised how important a settlement was for the UAR to facilitate peaceful construction and development.

4. Dr. Fawzi said he readily agreed with Mr. Thomson's assessment of the situation. But it was no good simply agreeing that the situation was explosive: the essential thing was to decide what action to take. The UAR did not want to say that any of their friends were doing too little, but they felt that all of them should exert themselves a little more to find a common-sense way out. It was clear that no party would gain any advantage from further destruction in the area and the UAR was still deeply interested in a political settlement. On their present policies the Israelis were effectively erecting a ghetto for themselves, and the Americans were being neither fair nor far-sighted. The UAR hoped that they could rely on further British co-operation in seeking a political solution.

5. Mr. Thomson said that Britain was in close touch with the Americans and, despite appearances, was very active behind the scenes in seeking to promote a settlement. British policy had not changed. HMG had been primarily responsible for the United Nations resolution and wished to see it implemented. There was no question of an ambivalent attitude on our part. HMG was watching the situation very closely to see whether there was any scope for intervention with a British initiative. In matters of this kind the right timing was crucially important. But he was most anxious that there should be no misunderstanding about the United Nations resolution. It was a package and it had some unpalatable things in it. Its over-riding principle was that there must be no territorial gains as a result of war: Israel must withdraw. But Israel must have secure and recognised boundaries agreed internationally. The State of Israel was there and had to be accepted as a fact. It would not be enough for the Arab States simply to accept Israel's boundaries. There would have to be firm guarantees and this was bound to cause problems for the Arab countries. There were however various approaches to the question of guarantees and on Sharm el Shaikh, for instance, HMG inclined to the view that a United Nations (not Israeli) presence would probably be most satisfactory.

6. Dr. Fawzi said that the UAR was very well aware of the difficulties. When the UAR accepted the United Nations resolution they did so on the understanding that it ruled out acquisition of territory by force. They could not in any circumstances, therefore, accept that Israel should acquire any territory through implementation of the resolution. No Arab political leader could agree to give up Jerusalem to the Israelis. In any settlement with the Israelis minor territorial changes were not, of course, ruled out but these must be strictly confined to very small areas such as villages which were at present cut in two or separated from their water supply. There could be no changes of the magnitude which the Americans seemed to have in mind. Faced with the attitude of the Israelis and the Americans - who seemed to allow the Israelis to be judges in their own cause, as was instanced by the proposal to station Israeli troops at Sharm el Shaikh - the UAR had no choice but to continue to be prepared for all eventualities, although they still hoped that common-sense would prevail and a peaceful solution would emerge. The UAR might be worried by the problem of Israel but it was certainly not frightened by Israel and, in the end, if a peaceful settlement were not achieved the question might be whether Israel should be allowed to exist at all. Such a turn in events would be bad for all concerned in the Middle East and he hoped that the Middle East's wound would not be allowed to fester to that extent, despite the inflammation which the Americans were causing by their actions.

7. Mr. Thomson said he had been encouraged by the degree of importance which the UAR clearly attached to achieving a political settlement. He was very conscious of the difficulties which they had to face in the press and amongst youth, for instance, in pursuing a peaceful policy. He had also noted how very considerably the Palestine resistance organisation had grown in the Middle East since his last visit four years before. This was a new and dangerous force to be reckoned with and a political settlement, if it was to last, would need to take account of the views of the Palestinians.

8. Dr. Fawzi said it was true that his Government was being increasingly criticised for its attachment to a peaceful settlement based on the 1967 resolution. Indeed at meetings over the last four days he had been criticised by colleagues from other Arab countries, but that did not weaken the resolve of the UAR. It was important in their view to

work constructively on the basis of the resolution. In principle the UAR agreed to limitations on armaments for the area but could not agree in present circumstances. It was right for the UAR to look to its own security. But why all the talk about Israel's security when over the past twenty years it had always been Israel who had been the aggressor in the area? When he had asked the Americans point blank whether they would intervene to stop any Arab invasion of Israel they would not deny it.

9. Dr. Fawzi emphasised that in any political settlement in the area the UAR would wish to maintain absolute freedom to refuse diplomatic relations and trade with Israel, even though it recognised Israel's international boundaries. The UAR had no bitterness against Israel as such and realised they could not "throw it into the sea". The UAR were very proud of their traditions and of the way they had treated the Jews in Egypt: they had been in a privileged position; there had been no ghettoes and no pogroms. Once the Israelis withdrew from conquered territories and were within boundaries recognised by the UAR it was unthinkable that the UAR would have any cause to make war on Israel.

10. In conclusion Mr. Thomson reiterated HMG's firm resolve to work for a peaceful settlement on the basis of the United Nations resolution. Nothing had deflected HMG from backing the resolution and the Four Power and Two Power Talks, though it was no secret that the Israeli Prime Minister had sought to do so when she had visited London in June. Mr. Thomson added that he would probably be visiting Israel later in the autumn and he would speak to the Israelis in the same terms as he had spoken to UAR Ministers.

11. Dr. Fawzi said the British were noted for their ingenuity and he begged that they should use this ingenuity to bring pressure to bear in the right quarters to achieve a peaceful settlement.

Office of the Minister without Portfolio

12th September 1969

RECORD OF MEETING BETWEEN THE MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO AND DR. FAWZI (Special Assistant to President Nasser on Foreign Affairs) IN CAIRO AT 3.45 p.m. ON 3rd SEPTEMBER 1969

PRESENT:

The Rt. Hon. George Thomson, MP	Dr. Fawzi
Sir Richard Beaumont	Private Secretary
Mr. D. Hanson	

In welcoming Mr. Thomson Dr. Fawzi said he had had reports of the Minister's talks with the President and the Foreign Minister and was very happy with what he had heard.

2. Mr. Thomson said it was very agreeable to him personally to come back to Cairo after an interval of four years. He remembered vividly the talks he had had with Dr. Fawzi in 1965 and was very disappointed that circumstances had made it impossible for him to complete his programme. On this occasion he was particularly pleased to have had the opportunity of seeing something of the UAR outside Cairo, especially the Aswan High Dam and the archaeological sites at Luxor and Saqqara. He was very glad to find that Anglo-UAR bilateral relations were improving and hoped they would continue to do so. The arrival of the Royal Ballet and the British Sculpture exhibition for the millenary celebrations were particularly gratifying to him since he had initialled the Cultural Agreement in 1965.

3. Mr. Thomson went on to say that as regards the general political situation in the Middle East he had observed two main changes since his last visit. On the one hand, the friction between Britain and the UAR over Aden was now at an end and the policy Britain had adopted for the Gulf area seemed generally acceptable in the UAR. On the other hand there were distressing developments in the Arab-Israeli situation. The whole situation was far more menacing, and it seemed to him that, if disaster were to be avoided, a political settlement had to be found. The only hope of this was in the implementation of the 1967 United Nations resolution. He was very conscious of the fact that the resolution was

almost two years old, but Britain believed that the hopes of implementation were by no means exhausted. Britain had important interests in the Middle East and it was to her advantage to work for a political settlement. Having seen the High Dam and something of the Egyptian countryside he realised how important a settlement was for the UAR to facilitate peaceful construction and development.

4. Dr. Fawzi said he readily agreed with Mr. Thomson's assessment of the situation. But it was no good simply agreeing that the situation was explosive: the essential thing was to decide what action to take. The UAR did not want to say that any of their friends were doing too little, but they felt that all of them should exert themselves a little more to find a common-sense way out. It was clear that no party would gain any advantage from further destruction in the area and the UAR was still deeply interested in a political settlement. On their present policies the Israelis were effectively erecting a ghetto for themselves, and the Americans were being neither fair nor far-sighted. The UAR hoped that they could rely on further British co-operation in seeking a political solution.

5. Mr. Thomson said that Britain was in close touch with the Americans and, despite appearances, was very active behind the scenes in seeking to promote a settlement. British policy had not changed. HMG had been primarily responsible for the United Nations resolution and wished to see it implemented. There was no question of an ambivalent attitude on our part. HMG was watching the situation very closely to see whether there was any scope for intervention with a British initiative. In matters of this kind the right timing was crucially important. But he was most anxious that there should be no misunderstanding about the United Nations resolution. It was a package and it had some unpalatable things in it. Its over-riding principle was that there must be no territorial gains as a result of war: Israel must withdraw. But Israel must have secure and recognised boundaries agreed internationally. The State of Israel was there and had to be accepted as a fact. It would not be enough for the Arab States simply to accept Israel's boundaries. There would have to be firm guarantees and this was bound to cause problems for the Arab countries. There were however various approaches to the question of guarantees and on Sharm el Shaikh, for instance, HMG inclined to the view that a United Nations (not Israeli) presence would probably be most satisfactory.

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7. Mr. Thomson said he had been encouraged by the degree of importance which the UAR clearly attached to achieving a political settlement. He was very conscious of the difficulties which they had to face in the press and amongst youth, for instance, in pursuing a peaceful policy. He had also noted how very considerably the Palestine resistance organisation had grown in the Middle East since his last visit four years before. This was a new and dangerous force to be reckoned with and a political settlement, if it was to last, would need to take account of the views of the Palestinians.

8. Dr. Fawzi said it was true that his Government was being increasingly criticised for its attachment to a peaceful settlement based on the 1967 resolution. Indeed at meetings over the last four days he had been criticised by colleagues from other Arab countries, but that did not weaken the resolve of the UAR. It was important in their view to

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Office of the Minister without Portfolio

12th September 1969

15 th September 1969

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RECORD OF MEETING BETWEEN THE MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO AND DR. FAWZI (Special Assistant to President Nasser on Foreign Affairs) IN CAIRO AT 3.45 p.m. ON 3rd SEPTEMBER 1969

PRESENT:

The Rt. Hon. George Thomson, MP	Dr. Fawzi
Sir Richard Beaumont	Private Secretary
Mr. D. Hanson	Mr. D. Hanson

In welcoming Mr. Thomson Dr. Fawzi said he had long reports of the Minister's talks with the President and the Foreign Minister and was very happy with what he had heard.

2. Mr. Thomson said it was very agreeable to him personally to come back to Cairo after an interval of four years. He remembered vividly the talks he had had with Dr. Fawzi in 1965 and was very disappointed that circumstances had made it impossible for him to complete his programme. On this occasion he was particularly pleased to have had the opportunity of seeing something of the UAR outside Cairo, especially the Aswan High Dam and the archaeological sites at Luxor and Sakkara. He was very glad to find that Anglo-UAR bilateral relations were improving and hoped they would continue to do so. The arrival of the Royal Ballet and the British Book Exhibition for the Alexandria celebrations were particularly good signs. He knew he had not installed the Cultural Agreement in 1965.

3. Mr. Thomson went on to say that as regards the general political situation in the Middle East he had observed some main changes since his last visit. On the one hand, the friction between Britain and the UAR over Aden was now at an end and the policy Britain had adopted for the Gulf area seemed generally acceptable in the UAR. On the other hand there were distressing developments in the Arab-Israeli situation. The whole situation was far more menacing, and it seemed to him that, if disaster were to be avoided, a political settlement had to be found. The only hope of this was in the implementation of the 1967 United Nations resolution. He was very conscious of the fact that the resolution was

almost two years old, but Britain believed that the hopes of implementation were by no means exhausted. Britain had important interests in the Middle East and it was to her advantage to work for a political settlement. Having seen the High Dam and something of the Egyptian countryside he realised how important a settlement was for the UAR to facilitate peaceful construction and development.

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8. Dr. Fawzi said it was true that his Government was being increasingly criticised for its attachment to a peaceful settlement based on the 1967 resolution. Indeed at meetings over the last four days he had been criticised by colleagues from other Arab countries, but that did not weaken the resolve of the UAR. It was important in their view to

work constructively on the basis of the resolution. In principle the UAR agreed to limitations on armaments for the area but could not agree in present circumstances. It was right for the UAR to look to its own security. But why all the talk about Israel's security when over the past twenty years it had always been Israel who had been the aggressor in the area? When he had asked the Americans point blank whether they would intervene to stop any Arab invasion of Israel they would not deny it.

9. Dr. Fawzi emphasised that in any political settlement in the area the UAR would wish to maintain absolute freedom to refuse diplomatic relations and trade with Israel, even though it recognised Israel's international boundaries. The UAR had no bitterness against Israel as such and realised they could not "throw it into the sea". The UAR were very proud of their traditions and of the way they had treated the Jews in Egypt: they had been in a privileged position; there had been no ghettoes and no pogroms. Once the Israelis withdrew from conquered territories and were within boundaries recognised by the UAR it was unthinkable that the UAR would have any cause to make war on Israel.

10. In conclusion Mr. Thomson reiterated HMG's firm resolve to work for a peaceful settlement on the basis of the United Nations resolution. Nothing had deflected HMG from backing the resolution and the Four Power and Two Power Talks, though it was no secret that the Israeli Prime Minister had sought to do so when she had visited London in June. Mr. Thomson added that he would probably be visiting Israel later in the autumn and he would speak to the Israelis in the same terms as he had spoken to UAR Ministers.

11. Dr. Fawzi said the British were noted for their ingenuity and he begged that they should use this ingenuity to bring pressure to bear in the right quarters to achieve a peaceful settlement.

Office of the Minister without Portfolio

12th September 1969

RECORD OF MEETING BETWEEN THE MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO AND DR. FAWZI (Special Assistant to President Nasser on Foreign Affairs) IN CAIRO AT 3.45 p.m. ON 3rd SEPTEMBER 1969

PRESENT:

The Rt. Hon. George Thomson, MP	Dr. Fawzi
Sir Richard Beaumont	Private Secretary
Mr. D. Hanson	

In welcoming Mr. Thomson Dr. Fawzi said he had had reports of the Minister's talks with the President and the Foreign Minister and was very happy with what he had heard.

2. Mr. Thomson said it was very agreeable to him personally to come back to Cairo after an interval of four years. He remembered vividly the talks he had had with Dr. Fawzi in 1965 and was very disappointed that circumstances had made it impossible for him to complete his programme. On this occasion he was particularly pleased to have had the opportunity of seeing something of the UAR outside Cairo, especially the Aswan High Dam and the archaeological sites at Luxor and Saqqara. He was very glad to find that Anglo-UAR bilateral relations were improving and hoped they would continue to do so. The arrival of the Royal Ballet and the British Sculpture exhibition for the millenary celebrations were particularly gratifying to him since he had initialled the Cultural Agreement in 1965.

3. Mr. Thomson went on to say that as regards the general political situation in the Middle East he had observed two main changes since his last visit. On the one hand, the friction between Britain and the UAR over Aden was now at an end and the policy Britain had adopted for the Gulf area seemed generally acceptable in the UAR. On the other hand there were distressing developments in the Arab-Israeli situation. The whole situation was far more menacing, and it seemed to him that, if disaster were to be avoided, a political settlement had to be found. The only hope of this was in the implementation of the 1967 United Nations resolution. He was very conscious of the fact that the resolution was